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Veronese's "martyrdom Of St. Justina": The Promotion Of A Local Martyr Saint

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VERONESE'S *MARTYRDOM OF ST. JUSTINA*: THE PROMOTION OF A LOCAL MARTYR SAINT

by

JONATHAN DAVID SALVATI

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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Advisor

Date

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PREFACE

This study involves an examination of Paolo Veronese's *Martyrdom of St. Justina* (1575, Fig.1), a monumental oil painting created for the high altar of Padua's Basilica of Santa Giustina. The painting depicts the martyrdom of Justina, an Early Christian martyr and one of the principal patron saints of Padua. Following the composition and style developed in the artist's earlier martyrdom pictures, this work imagined the martyr's execution as a noonday public spectacle with an opening vision of Paradise overhead. The two spheres depicted in the altarpiece, terrestrial and celestial, evince all of the trappings of Veronese's characteristically Venetian interpretation of sacred history. Veronese scholars have most often placed this altarpiece within the context of the Counter-Reformation and the subsequent development of iconography emphasizing Catholic orthodoxy.

Focus on this grand narrative of post-Tridentine art, however, has tended to neglect the civic and political specificity of individual works. For example, the representation of martyrdom, while indisputably defending and celebrating Catholic tradition, also provided an opportunity for civic and religious institutions to spotlight and exalt local saints. I argue that Veronese's painting for Santa Giustina reflected the local history and civic concerns of the Paduan *commune* and responded to contemporary political events affecting the Republic of Venice. This analysis will seek to demonstrate the altarpiece's complexity as a visual document that engaged with various geopolitical interests from the city of Padua to the Republic of Venice. I specifically argue that Veronese's altarpiece emphasized martial imagery in order to connect the saint's sacrifice to Padua's classical and medieval past as well as to contemporary Venetian history.

This analysis will **not** comprise of an in-depth investigation into the Benedictine patrons who commissioned the work nor will it discuss their specific theological doctrines. Rather, I have chosen to assess how the seemingly secondary details of the painting actually operated in complex ways that ultimately reinforced and strengthened the primary, liturgical function of the altarpiece. An image such as Veronese's *Martyrdom of St. Justina* reflects its own particular civic, political, and historical milieu, a phenomenon that does not contradict but rather complements the larger spiritual and theological goals of the work. By articulating some of the civic and political aspects of Veronese's altarpiece, and of late sixteenth-century Venetian imagery in general, I hope to provide a foundation for later studies that will further uncover revealing aspects of this complex, stimulating work.

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INTRODUCTION

As with many significant paintings of the time, *The Martyrdom of St. Justina* was part of a larger architectural project directed by the patrons. Although not completed until 1575, the altarpiece was a significant component of the mid-sixteenth-century reconstruction of the Benedictine church of Santa Giustina in Padua (Fig. 2). This basilica became the political and administrative center of the growing Cassinese Congregation, a Benedictine organization that had at one time taken its name from Padua's patron saint.¹ The reconstruction of the church from the aging medieval structure to one in the new Renaissance style signaled the growing wealth, power, and popularity of the congregation. Not surprisingly, the Benedictine patrons sought an innovative work for the high altar that would parallel the more contemporary, updated style of the overall structure. This work, to be placed behind the altar on the back wall of the church's considerably elongated choir space, would narrate the martyrdom of the church's titular saint.

Considering the long working relationship between Veronese and the Benedictines, the selection of the painter for the commission was not a surprising choice. By the 1570s, Veronese had worked for the Benedictines and for the Cassinese Congregation in particular, on numerous occasions.² The major paintings that resulted from this relationship must have convinced the

¹ The name changed from the Congregation of Sta. Giustina to the Cassinese Congregation once the key monastery of Monte Cassino entered the fold in 1505. Background information regarding the Cassinese Congregation can be found in Barry Collett, *Italian Benedictine Scholars and the Reformation: The Congregation of Santa Giustina of Padua* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

² Examples of this patronage include three works for the abbey of San Benedetto Po near Mantua, two altarpieces for the monastery of Santa Maria di Praglia south of Padua, and, most famously, the *Marriage of Cana* for the refectory of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice. Beverly Louise Brown suggests this pattern of patronage may have its starting point with Antonio Badile, Veronese's master, who may have secured his pupil's earliest working relationship with the Benedictines. See Beverly Louise Brown, "Veronese and the Church Triumphant: The Altarpieces for San Benedetto Po," *Artibus et Historiae* 18 (1997): 58. For more general information concerning the

patrons of the artist's ability to paint large-scale, multi-figure works depicting sacred history. Veronese's talent for illustrating religious narrative through a visual style that emphasized monumental pageantry complemented the patrons' desire to produce a grand vehicle that exalted their titular saint. A decade earlier, the unqualified success of Veronese's *Marriage of Cana* (1565) for the comparably newly-renovated San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice had contributed to the renown of the Benedictine monastery, an upswing in popularity that the Cassinese Congregation doubtlessly wished to duplicate for their mother church.³

In their selection of Veronese for the commission, the Benedictine patrons were likely acknowledging the artist's previous treatment of the subject of martyrdom as well. In canvases such as *The Martyrdom of St. George* (c. 1565, Fig. 3) and *The Martyrdom of Primus and Felicianus* (1562), the latter also a noteworthy Benedictine commission, the painter represented the martyrdoms of the saints using a composition and style that he was to adapt and expand in his project for Santa Giustina. These earlier examples by Veronese, however, did not emerge as isolated innovations but rather key points in a larger artistic and historical trajectory: the advent of the martyrdom altarpiece as a reputable and significant genre. The history of the martyrdom altarpiece, as we will see, became simply one facet of the larger general shift to works with a narrative focus.

artist's relationship with the Benedictines, see also: Richard Cocke, "Exemplary Lives: Veronese's Representations of Martyrdom and the Council of Trent," *Renaissance Studies* 10, no. 3 (1996): 389-90.

³ According to Tracy E. Cooper, the sixteenth-century admirers of the *Marriage of Cana* included not only the resident monks but also many aristocratic guests and visitors to San Giorgio Maggiore. See "Un modo per 'la riforma cattolica'? La scelta di Paolo Veronese per il Refettorio di San Giorgio Maggiore." In *Crisi e rinnovamenti nell'autunno del Rinascimento a Venezia*, eds. Vittore Branca and Carlo Ossola (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1991), 290.

The Titular Saint and the Venetian Altarpiece

The full-scale martyrdom altarpiece did not figure prominently before the sixteenth century. Peter Humfrey has identified three altarpiece types that were popular at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Venice.⁴ These “types” addressed the significance of titular saints and evaluated their specific role in altar imagery. The *sacra conversazione* model popularized by Giovanni Bellini in his altarpieces for the Venetian churches of San Giobbe and San Zaccaria represented the most widespread type circa 1500.⁵ These paintings of the Madonna and Child surrounded by saints highlighted the iconic nature of the sacred image as opposed to true narrative. By representing a timeless space in which saints from different time periods could accompany the primary intercessor, Mary, in a communal gathering, these altarpieces acknowledged the Byzantine mosaics and icons of the Venetian past.⁶ In these instances, the titular saint frequently appeared in the place of honor at the Virgin’s immediate right but did not communicate the primary significance of the work, a role still assumed by the Madonna and Child group.

The second type identified by Humfrey, popularized a few decades later, consisted of those altarpieces in which the titular was placed at the center of a group of saints.⁷ These works strengthened the claims of the titular saint’s intercessory powers by substituting the saint for

⁴ See Humfrey, Peter, “Altarpieces and Altar Dedications in Counter-Reformation Venice and the Veneto,” *Renaissance Studies* 10, no. 3 (1996): 373.

⁵ See Rona Goffen (“Bellini, S. Giobbe and Altar Egos,” *Artibus et Historiae* 7 (1986): 57-70) for a more detailed consideration of Giovanni Bellini’s influence on the development of the *sacra conversazione*.

⁶ Goffen, “Bellini, S. Giobbe and Altar Egos,” 60. For example, the seraphs in the mosaics depicted in the S. Giobbe altarpiece refer specifically to a particular source mosaic in San Marco.

⁷ Ibid.

Mary; he or she became the work's prime intercessor and chief focus. As with the traditional Madonna and Child image, these altarpieces assembled saints in a space typically unbounded by temporal or geographic specifications. In Venice, this arrangement appeared in such works as Titian's *St. Mark Altarpiece* (c. 1510, Fig. 4) and Sebastiano del Piombo's *San Giovanni Crisostomo Altarpiece* (1510). However, despite the promotion of the titular saint in these examples, such paintings actually revealed very little about the life of the depicted saint. Titian's altarpiece for Santo Spirito in Isola, for instance, elevated Mark's significance compositionally without truly illustrating visual information about the saint's life or death. The saint's representation succeeded conceptually by highlighting his importance to Venetian religious life but failed to serve a clear didactic or pedagogical purpose. The altarpiece failed to explicate the *istoria* that might have engaged the viewer. The work also did not directly link the saint's life and death to that of Christ, something that was to be a primary function of the martyrdom altarpiece.

However, Humfrey's third type of altar representation does involve the depiction of the titular saint in a narrative situation. The High Renaissance, spurred by the growing desire for naturalism in artistic representation, saw a significant rethinking of the role of the saints within the altarpiece format. This re-conceptualization resulted in an increased interest in narrative subjects in place of the traditional iconic depictions.⁸ Initially, sacred narratives consisted primarily of events described in the New Testament, most often subjects with a Christological focus such as the Baptism of Christ.⁹ While the narrative *pale* of the early sixteenth-century focused on traditional Marian subjects as well (e.g. the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Magi,

⁸ Ibid., 374

⁹ Typically, and not surprisingly, for an altar dedicated to John the Baptist. Humfrey, "Altarpieces and Altar Dedications," 373.

etc.), these altarpieces eventually embraced saintly narratives, particularly the martyrdom of the saints.

The Martyrdom Altarpiece

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, martyrdom imagery emerged most frequently in fresco cycles.¹⁰ In the altarpieces of this same time period, martyrdom scenes were typically restricted to the smaller *predella* panels that supported the principal subject above. Alternately, these subjects could be seen in the less significant side panels of a polyptych. Giotto's *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* (c. 1305, Fig. 5), for example, depicted the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, but only as subjects for the subsidiary wings that flanked the more significant, central panel of Christ.¹¹ The relegation of the saint's martyrdom to a subsidiary position within the altarpiece paralleled the larger trend of placing the titular saint in a role that supported Mary and/or Christ. With the development and increased popularity of the monumental *pala* in the sixteenth century, artists and patrons began to prefer martyrdom scenes as dramatic narratives in place of the more static representations prominent in earlier centuries.

Titian's groundbreaking *St. Peter Martyr Altarpiece* (Fig. 6), created for Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, became the first *dramatic* martyrdom altarpiece in Venice, a work whose influence on Veronese's later martyrdom images should not be ignored.¹² Titian's altarpiece,

¹⁰ Patricia Meilman, *Titian and the Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 33-5. Meilman cites Filippo Lippi's *Beheading of St. John the Baptist* and *Stoning of St. Stephen* (both c. 1460) for the choir of Prato's duomo as prominent examples of this trend.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹² Meilman (*Titian and the Altarpiece*, 48-9) considers Carpaccio's *Crucifixion and Apotheosis of the Ten Thousand Martyrs* (c. 1515) to be an earlier approximation of the narrative martyrdom altarpiece but ultimately discounts its inclusion in this category because of its lack of focus. Whether one considers Titian's altarpiece to be the "first" martyrdom altarpiece in the city may be debatable, but its radical innovations certainly set it apart from any predecessors.

greatly celebrated in his lifetime, was innovative on a variety of counts, not least of which was the emotional intensity of the martyr's death in the work.¹³ The artist depicted the murder of the Dominican preacher, Peter of Verona, at the very moment when his assassin stabbed him on a forest road. Renaissance writers and critics believed the work exemplified to an outstanding degree the ideas of Leon Battista Alberti, particularly the art theorist's notion that the *istoria* should emotionally move, instruct and entertain the viewer.¹⁴ Titian had transformed a hitherto subsidiary subject of the polyptych, the martyrdom scene, into the dramatic focus of the monumental *pala*. The naturalistic illusionism and action of Titian's *Peter Martyr* supplanted the perceived archaic rigidity of the *sacra conversazione* and suggested new directions for the narrative altarpiece. Artists such as Veronese followed in the wake of Titian's achievements by expanding on the elder artist's innovations, even amplifying the monumental qualities of the master's work.

The growth of the martyrdom altarpiece at this time highlighted the Church's desire to emphasize the sacrifice of the saints and to link this sacrifice to the death of Christ. Of course, it was a well-established concept that the altarpiece should clearly refer to the liturgy through its iconography and formal arrangement.¹⁵ The martyrdom altarpiece as such embodied a central doctrinal concept: the martyr saint as an imitator of Christ (*Imitatio Christi*.) Titian's accomplishment consisted of applying the innovative language of the High Renaissance, especially the dramatic illusionism of Raphael and Michelangelo, to the Venetian altarpiece

¹³ The altarpiece represents the murder of the Dominican preacher, Peter of Verona, at the very moment when his assassin stabs him on a forest road. Meilman's *Titian and the Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice* takes Titian's *St. Peter Martyr Altarpiece* as its central subject.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 138-9.

¹⁵ One of the essential studies remains Staale Sinding-Larsen, *Iconography and Ritual: A Study of Analytical Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

without sacrificing the liturgical significance and sacred meanings appropriate to the genre. Veronese's altarpieces, of which the *St. Justina* is a prominent example, would augment this tradition of incorporating doctrinal commentary in the representation of saintly martyrdom.

The Early Christian Martyr during the Counter-Reformation

One salient characteristic of the martyrdom altarpiece of Veronese's era was the overwhelming choice to depict martyrs from the Early Christian period. Unlike Titian and other Venetian forbearers, Veronese would almost exclusively depict martyr saints from late antiquity. Indeed, Veronese's representation of Justina's martyrdom follows similar treatments of the deaths of Sebastian, Primus and Felicianus, and George, all saints victimized by Diocletian's persecutions in the historical period that saw the growth of Christianity and the development of its most prized values. This renewed and reenergized interest in the cult of the Early Christian martyrs was, as is well known, a product of the Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent. The Counter-Reformation sought to glorify the heroism and sanctity of the Early Christian saints in response to Protestant criticism of the cult of the saints.¹⁶ The Council defended the use of saints as intercessors and the utilization of their images as exemplars for the faithful. The proclamation that "we adore Christ and venerate the saints whose likeness they bear" explicitly connects the veneration of the saints and their images to the prototype of Christ.¹⁷ Hence, in the

¹⁶ While the Council of Trent did not address Martin Luther's iconoclasm and controversial views of saints and images in the early sessions of the 1540s, the body did eventually attend to these issues in the closing sessions of the 1560s. See Richard Cocke, "Exemplary Lives: Veronese's Representations of Martyrdom and the Council of Trent," *Renaissance Studies* 10 (1996): 393.

¹⁷ The essential English translation of the sessions of the Council remains H.J. Schroeder, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1955). The above passage is from the Twenty-Fifth Session, "On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images," (215-7), traditionally the most important section for art historians.

post-Tridentine period, the martyr saints of late antiquity became the most auspicious choice for representation. These saints not only evoked the heroic period of the early Church when Christians bravely confronted the pagan Roman Empire, but they also directly followed Christ in a sense both chronological and exemplary. For the sixteenth-century, the conflict between the early martyrs and the Roman Empire paralleled the contemporary contestation between the “true believers” of the Church Militant and the heretical forces of Protestantism and Islam.

Within this ideological framework, the martyrdom of the saint became the most significant moment of his or her biography, superseding the accretions of medieval legends and miracle stories. For instance, the Martyrdom of St. George became the ideal representation of the saint in place of the legend of George conquering the dragon, an apocryphal tale that partook more of medieval chivalry than established doctrine. Indeed, this particular shift informed the commission of Veronese’s altarpiece for San Giorgio in Braida (Verona) in which the artist’s execution of the former subject replaced an earlier version of the latter.¹⁸ Martyrdom, therefore, represented a subject that was both doctrinally orthodox and practically useful.

The transition toward martyrdom as the preferred visual treatment of the lives of the saints helps explain the arrival of previously unexplored subjects in the canon of painting during the Counter-Reformation period. While St. Justina’s martyrdom had not been deemed a noteworthy subject prior to this period, the 1570s proved a propitious decade in which to reevaluate the saint’s cult and to provide the saint with a significant monument in the form of Veronese’s altarpiece. This paper will seek to determine the manner in which local and regional politics helped shape the appearance and meanings behind this work. The concept of militarism

¹⁸ Veronese’s *Martyrdom of St. George* (c. 1565) presumably replaced Francesco Caroto’s *St. George and the Princess*. According to Sergio Marinelli, upon receiving the commission to replace Caroto’s work, Veronese drafted a depiction of the same subject as Caroto’s but eventually switched the subject to a martyrdom scene at the behest of the patrons. See Sergio Marinelli, “La pala per l’altar maggiore di San Giorgio in Braida,” in *Nuovi studi su Paolo Veronese*, ed. Massimo Gemin (Venice: Arsenale Editrice, 1990), 323-32.

in the construction of the idea of the martyr saint during the Counter-Reformation will be crucial to this evaluation. I argue that this concept of militarism is historical in nature and is used as a means of connecting ideas that invoke the past and the contemporary simultaneously.

Chapter 1 will focus on the cult of Justina and on the saint's significance to the *commune* of Padua. The first part of the chapter will analyze the saint's appearance in the hagiographic literature and examine the saint's role as the representative of Padua's transition from pagan antiquity to Christianity. The second part will look at Justina's visual depiction in medieval and Renaissance Padua, most particularly in the votive paintings designed for Padua's primary civic structures: the Palazzo del Podestà and the Loggia del Consiglio. Next will be an examination of the iconography of Veronese's altarpiece. The painting's iconography, much of which revolves around martial imagery, includes references to Padua's ancient and medieval past. Veronese's depiction of the martyr saint depends heavily on earlier concepts of the martyr as a "soldier of Christ" that were formed in late antiquity and reworked in the medieval period.

Chapter 2 will discuss the figure of Justina in light of the Holy League's victory over the Ottoman Turks at Lepanto on the saint's feast day (October 7th). The production of the altarpiece in the years following Lepanto was critical in dictating the formal appearance of the work and the ideological meanings that inform it. The martyr saint's "promotion" by the Venetian Republic resulted from her perceived role in the crucial victory, a fact demonstrated by the visual imagery of the time period. Indeed, a key component of this chapter will be an examination of the propagandistic images that flourished in Venice during this span. This imagery responded to the political events of the 1570s and to the festivals and processions that surrounded these events. This chapter will also examine the influence of Venetian humanism on Veronese's altarpiece, specifically the increased attention devoted to the classical theater and its connection to the

concept of martyrdom. This contemporary understanding of martyrdom, I argue, would also have been shaped by recent historical events, namely the recent execution of Marc'Antonio Bragadin by the Ottoman Turks in Cyprus. Lastly, the chapter will consider the nature of the altarpiece and the ramifications of incorporating political discourse in the format.

CHAPTER 1

Veronese's *Martyrdom of St. Justina* has a traditional bipartite structure in which the celestial upper half serves as a heavenly vision for the figure of St. Justina in the earthbound world of the lower section. This bottom portion of the altarpiece remains visually consistent with the ceremonial style of Veronese's earlier martyrdom altarpieces. The elaborately staged and crowded foreground features opulently dressed figures that animate the pictorial space as in the painter's earlier representations of Saints Primus and Felicianus and of St. George. At the very center of the lower foreground, St. Justina kneels and looks heavenward as the surrounding figures prepare for the saint's execution. Executioners, guardsmen, and nobles share the foreground space with animals, classical architectural elements, and the requisite pagan idol, in this instance a gilded statue of Mars. The background includes cavalry officers, a crowd of Paduan citizens, and a view of the medieval Basilica of St. Anthony, locally known as "Il Santo."

The upper register of the painting, however, involves a grander vision of Paradise than Veronese and his workshop had hitherto explored in any of his earlier works. The group of Christ, Mary and John the Evangelist appears at the work's apex. This sacred trinity forms a strong centralized vertical axis with the martyr saint down below and constitutes a modified Deësis (with the Evangelist taking the place of the traditional Baptist) in which Mary and John supplicate on behalf of Justina. The majestic figure of Christ in this image falls into the category of the *Salvator Mundi*, an image of the enthroned savior with the *globus cruciger* in his left hand.

An expansive angelic choir surrounds Christ, Mary and John as a group of naked *putti* below them serves the structural function of integrating the two parts of the composition. On a narrative level, these same *putti* carry the crown of martyrdom and palm fronds that are the

necessary props used to celebrate the saint's martyrdom. The impressive celestial choir of the *St. Justina* altarpiece, consisting of both choristers and instrumentalists, contains obvious similarities to Veronese's contemporary *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (1575, Fig. 7) for the convent of Santa Caterina in Venice.¹⁹ Despite the more grandiose treatment in the Paduan altarpiece, the angels with lutes in the foreground of the celestial top portion resemble the figures in the Venetian altarpiece. The similar highlighting of an angelic choir in both works can be explained by the fact that the two altarpieces were both placed in the choirs of their respective institutions. Therefore, the large celestial choir in the *St. Justina* altarpiece emphasizes the newly reconstructed sanctuary of the basilica (Fig. 8) and the function of the choir. The work's iconography points to the significant role of the choir space in the overall architectural design. As with many artistic projects, the visual appearance of the work owes as much to its immediate surroundings as to the work's actual narrative.

Besides the inclusion of the heavenly choir and its relationship to the work for Santa Caterina, the visual qualities of the *St. Justina* altarpiece resemble Veronese's paintings of the same period in other ways. Canvases intended for Venetian institutions such as *The Feast in the House of Levi* (1573) for the refectory of Santi Giovanni and Paolo and *The Adoration of the Magi* (1573) for San Silvestro evince a similar aesthetic: a choreographic presentation of multiple figures as a stately and ceremonial tableau, the juxtaposition of jeweled colors rather than dramatic chiaroscuro, detailed attention to the textures of rich fabrics and drapery, and the use of emphatic hand gestures to carry the emotional meaning of the piece. The most striking aspects of these works would surely be the prominence of stately pageantry, an emphasis on

¹⁹ For more on this work see Francesca Toffolo, "Art and the Conventual Life in Renaissance Venice: The Monastery Church of Santa Caterina de' Sacchi," (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2005).

display and spectacle that delights in bright colors and a virtuoso handling of crowds and body movement.²⁰

However, the innovative aspects of the Benedictine altarpiece for Santa Giustina have less to do with style and composition per se and more with narrative content. Indeed, the uniqueness of Veronese's painting stems more from the manner in which the artist included the history and traditions of the city of Padua in his depiction of the martyrdom of its patron saint. The representations of St. Justina, a rare occurrence outside of Padua, naturally take their cues from the preexisting textual evidence (hagiographic writings, martyrologies, etc.). This written tradition, as with the visual history that follows, proves to be far from straightforward.

St. Justina: the Textual Evidence

The story of St. Justina's life and death, as with many martyr narratives, does not survive in a single canonical account. *The Golden Legend*, the most popular source of medieval hagiography, provides little assistance since it recounts the life of Justina of Antioch, not Justina of Padua.²¹ Indeed, the confusion between these two similarly named virgin saints has often complicated the process of identification.²² Any discussion of the writings and images that invoke St. Justina of Padua must therefore clearly distinguish the Paduan martyr from her Near Eastern namesake and from any possible conflation of the two figures.

²⁰ The tension between Veronese's penchant for spectacle/display and the sanctity of the sacred image is traced in Richard Cocks's book-length study, *Paolo Veronese: Piety and Display in an Age of Religious Reform*, (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2001).

²¹ See Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, selected and translated by Christopher Stace (London: Penguin Books, 1998): 243-7.

²² Examples of this confusion include the sixth-century mosaic in Ravenna's S. Apollinare Nuovo and the sixteenth-century painting by Moretto da Brescia, *St Justina with the Unicorn*. Both St. Justina of Antioch and St. Justina of Padua have been linked to both works.

In fact, scant evidence exists of an historical Justina of Padua. Much of her story stems from the 1177 rediscovery (*inventio*) of her relics and as such exists primarily as a medieval invention.²³ Two medieval documents form the central tradition of her narrative: The *Passio Sanctae Iustinae virginis et martyris* and the *Vita sancti Prosdocimi*. The first of these dates to the early medieval period, the sixth century, and serves as the first hagiographic source to document this enigmatic figure.²⁴ The *Vita* of Prosdocimus likely dates to the tenth century and, through a description of Padua's proto-bishop and Justina's spiritual mentor, added biographical details to the existing account. These two texts constituted the essential literary *corpus* to which were added other legends and apocryphal stories.

According to these primary sources, Justina of Padua was the daughter of Valerius (Vitalianus), a king of the city in late antiquity. These accounts place Justina's life and death in the period of Diocletian's persecutions. Nonetheless, other noteworthy chronicles that came much later such as the *Chronica Giustiniana* located the saint's life and death in the time of Nero instead.²⁵ This later chronological shift most likely served to correct an otherwise glaring anachronism, namely the virgin saint's close association with Prosdocimus, a disciple of Peter. According to all sources, Prosdocimus's reputed first-century evangelization of the Veneto region included the conversion and baptism of the noble Justina, a problematic accomplishment

²³ Andrea Tilatti, "Introduzione," in *Giustina e le altre: Sante e culti femminili in Italia settentrionale dalla prima età cristiana al secolo XII*, ed. Andrea Tilatti and Francesco G.B. Trolese (Roma: Viella s.r.l., 2009). There is some dispute as to the date of the *inventio* of Justina's relics: the year is either 1174 or 1177. The latter date included the discovery of the relics of Luke and Matthew and some believe Justina's relics should be placed within this larger "find."

²⁴ Ibid., The *Passio* was the first textual source to link the saint to the city of Padua and to the episcopate.

²⁵ The *Cronica Giustiniana* (1619) by Girolamo da Potenza (ms BP 829 Biblioteca Civica di Padova) and the *Vita di Santa Giustina vergine e martire Protettrice* (1627) by Giovanni Battista Martini (ms BP 704-XV Biblioteca Civica di Padova) are both seventeenth-century chronicles and thus cannot serve as possible source material for Veronese's work. However, amidst the scarcity of sixteenth-century chronicles, these must serve as possible indications of the preexisting oral tradition surrounding the Renaissance conception of St. Justina and the history of her cult. The *Chronica* establishes Justina's death as thirty-four years after Christ's Ascension.

if the young woman's martyrdom indeed took place c. 304. Even so, the bulk of hagiographic writings continued to place her life and martyrdom in the period of the Great Persecution. This preference, anachronisms and all, contextualized Justina's life and death within the last wave of tyrannical pagan rule before Constantine's legalization of Christianity. As a result, Justina and the other Early Christian saints of the Diocletianic period symbolically marked the historical transition from paganism to the new faith.

The generally accepted versions of Justina's life underlined similar aspects of her identity: her royal status as the daughter of Valerius, her vow of chastity and conversion to Christianity, her baptism by Prosdocimus, and her death at the hands of the emperor Maximian (or Maximianus). According to Justina's *Passio*, Maximian's troops detained the virgin martyr's carriage on its return trip to Padua after the princess and her ladies had spent time running God's errands in the countryside. This is the narrative moment, for example, depicted in the background of Veronese's painting for the abbatial gallery of Santa Giustina, commissioned c. 1556 (p. 10). This small-scale work also depicts in the foreground the tribunal with the enthroned Maximian, an event that reputedly took place in Padua's Campus Martius.²⁶ After her apprehension, Justina's martyrdom follows the common hagiographic pattern: the Romans command her to worship the idols; she refuses and is consequently executed on October 7th.

The continuation of Justina's cult after her death includes many gaps and elisions as well. Chronicles indicate her burial in the cemetery region southeast of the walls of ancient Patavium, an area that eventually became the site of the saint's titular basilica and monastery. This cemetery would have been the burial site of both the city's pagan and Christian inhabitants. Allegedly, Prosdocimus consecrated an oratory (Fig. 10) within this cemetery whose significance

²⁶ See the entry in Alessandro Ballarin and Davide Banzato, eds., *Da Bellini a Tintoretto: Dipinti dei Musei civici di Padova dalla metà del Quattrocento ai primi del Seicento* (Roma: Leonardo-De Luca editori, 1991), 195-6.

was linked to the figure of Justina.²⁷ Debate still continues as to whether this oratory, essentially a funerary chapel, housed the tomb of Justina or whether the adjacent cemetery basilica was erected soon afterwards for the purpose of housing the sacred corpse. These developments, both the oratory and the original church, have most often been attributed to the actions of Opilion, a sixth-century patrician and urban prefect.²⁸ Epigraphic and literary evidence for the cult of St. Justina in the early medieval period has otherwise proven quite scarce. One of the few exceptions is the *Vita San Martini* by the Latin poet and bishop Venantius Fortunatus, a text in which the poet urges the reader to visit the basilica of Santa Giustina in Padua in order to honor both the virgin martyr and the frescoed images of St. Martin that appear there.²⁹

The majority of the hagiographic writings about the saint, however, followed the *inventio* of her relics in 1174/77. Her corpse, along with those of many other martyr saints, was discovered in the area underneath the high altar of the basilica that existed before the fire of 1177. The histories of the sacred relics, of the various sarcophagi in which they were contained, and of the shift in placement within the various reconstructions of the church have been the subject of book-length studies and are too tortuously complex to be fully detailed here.³⁰ Suffice to say that after the sixteenth-century reconstruction of the church, Justina's corpse finally found its contemporary resting place in the high altar with Veronese's massive altarpiece located far behind it on the back wall of the sanctuary.

²⁷ The *Chronica Giustiniana*, for example, makes this claim.

²⁸ Evidence for this patronage consists of an inscription on a marble tympanum that once served as the entrance to the chapel. The text states that Opilion built the oratory to honor St. Justina.

²⁹ Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints*, volume X: 149.

³⁰ See Zampieri, Girolamo, *I sepolcri padovani di Santa Giustina: il sarcofago 75-1879 del Victoria and Albert Museum di Londra e altri sarcophagi dalla Basilica di Santa Giustina in Padova* (Roma: <<L'Erma>> di Bretschneider, 2006).

The Imagery of St. Justina

The popularity of St. Justina's cult in Padua can be seen in the numerous visual depictions of the saint that stretch back to the medieval period.³¹ Early sculptural depictions include a relief figure carved for the thirteenth-century Romanesque portal of Santa Giustina (Fig. 11) as well as a figure of the saint carved into the Rogati-Negri sarcophagus (c. 1350, Fig. 12) found in one of the chapels of the Santo.³² Both images represent the saint's regality by depicting a crown upon her head, but the hand gestures and attributes reveal notable differences between the two. In the portal image, Justina pulls on her robe with her left hand and holds a spherical fruit in her right. The sarcophagus image shows the saint holding a palm frond in her left hand while she gestures palm outwards with the other hand. Neither of these two depictions seemed to have significantly influenced later painted depictions of St. Justina as they omit what would later be her most important attribute: the dagger piercing the saint's heart.

Images of the saint increased significantly in the fifteenth century after the Benedictines formed the Congregation of Santa Giustina. At this point, the saint emerged frequently both in single devotional images and as one of several sacred figures in various polyptychs and *sacre conversazione*. Small-scale devotional images included at least one example attributed to Giovanni Bellini (c. 1460-70, Fig. 13) in which the saint is depicted with a dagger in her chest, a type of representation that typified the standard for centuries to come.³³ In fact, the Bellini seems to prefigure Veronese's treatment of the virgin martyr in several ways, not least of which would be the careful attention paid to colorful, lavish drapery and jewelry as a means of

³¹ See George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North-East Italy* (Florence, 1978), 580-2.

³² Giustino Prevedello, "Origine ed evoluzione dell'immagine di Santa Giustina," in *Santa Giustina e il primo Cristianesimo a Padova*, ed. Andrea Nante (Museo Diocesano di Padova, 2004), 115-7.

³³ Pictured but not discussed extensively in Prevedello, "Origine ed evoluzione," 118.

highlighting the saint's royalty, both its human and divine aspects. Other single-figure treatments of the saint in the fifteenth century generally involved the patronage of the Basilica of Santa Giustina, including two sculptures by Pantaleon di Paolo (Fig. 14) and Francesco Segala (Fig. 15).³⁴

However, Justina's most celebrated depictions in the fifteenth century recorded her presence with other holy figures, generally the other patron saints, or *santi patroni*, of Padua: Prosdocimus, Daniel, the Holy Innocents, Luke the Evangelist, and Anthony of Padua. Mantegna's *St. Luke Polyptych* (1453, Fig. 16-17), for example, included an image of Justina in its comprehensive representation of Padua's *santi patroni*. Mantegna created this work for a chapel in Santa Giustina dedicated to the Evangelist, a site believed to be the repository of Luke's relics.³⁵ Justina appears at the far right of the lower register of the altarpiece, one in a series of local saints that includes Daniel (with a model of the city of Padua in his hand), Maximus (bishop of Padua), Julian of Padua, Prosdocimus, and Luke himself. The depiction of Justina here belongs to the traditional devotional type that the period favored. While the altarpiece privileges the figure of Luke, represented here as a scholar and historian in order to emphasize the scholasticism and learning of the Benedictine congregation, Justina's inclusion here signals her importance as one of the city's patron saints.³⁶

The saint's appearance in the updated *pala* format remained dependent on her local claims and reflected civic iconography. Once again, Justina accompanied the *santi patroni* of the

³⁴ Ibid. The work attributed to Pantaleon di Paolo is unique in representing the wound inflicted by the dagger in the left side of the saint's chest but not the dagger itself. This type of representation would not become terribly common.

³⁵ Kann, Andrea, "Who Was the Audience for St. Luke's Cult in Padua," in *Images, Relics and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sally J. Cornelison and Scott B. Montgomery (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), 157-72.

³⁶ Ibid., 157.

commune in these *sacre conversazione*. The most significant example in this category, the *pala* painted by Romanino (c. 1513, Fig.18), the early sixteenth-century Brescian painter, actually occupied the high altar of Santa Giustina for several decades before the church's mid-century reconstruction.³⁷ This work, like Mantegna's polyptych, combined local Paduan and Benedictine saints in order to celebrate both the *commune* and the order. Justina's position to the immediate right of Mary, the place of honor, alluded to the patron saint's importance to both of these groups. However, despite its sixteenth-century dating, Romanino's altar work formally reflected an essentially conservative aesthetic modeled after the Venetian altarpieces of Giovanni Bellini and others. It is not surprising that the Benedictines of the mid-sixteenth century would want to commission an altar work that would eventually replace Romanino's *pala*. The eventual replacement, Veronese's altarpiece, evinced a completely different approach to celebrating the titular saint, as Humfrey has described in more general terms.

Another example of an artistic work that incorporated a representation of Justina was less conventional, although it too belonged to the tradition of the *santi patroni* image. Donatello's sculpted altarpiece for the Santo (c. 1447-50, Fig. 19-20), a program of seven freestanding bronze figures and several narrative relief plaques, also incorporated Justina's image, but in this case the artist included her representation in an ensemble that departed from a Benedictine iconography.³⁸ Unlike the Benedictine works, the life-size figures here included local saints (Justina, Prosdocimus, Daniel), Franciscan saints (Francis, Louis of Toulouse), and one who represented fell into both categories (Anthony), an obvious choice considering the altarpiece's

³⁷ Alessandro Ballarin and Davide Banzato, *Da Bellini a Tintoretto*, 115-19.

³⁸ For more contemporary discussions of Donatello's altarpiece, see Geraldine A. Johnson, "Approaching the Altar: Donatello's Sculpture in the Santo," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52 (autumn 1999): 627-66 as well as Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello and the High Altar in the Santo, Padua," in *IL60: Essays Honoring Irving Lavin on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. by Marilyn Aronberg Lavin (New York: Italica Press, 1990).

location in a major Franciscan basilica. Once again, Justina's depiction here is fairly traditional, although in this instance the instrument of her martyrdom, the dagger/sword, has been omitted.

This bronze group, influenced by the sculptural tradition of saints' tombs, communicated a broad message that combined the interests of Franciscan spirituality and the desire to invoke a civic iconography.³⁹ Whereas the church's status as St. Anthony's resting place necessitated his presence in the altar, the inclusion of the other local saints pointed to their vigilant protection of the city and its interests. Intended for the elite political and ecclesiastical rulers of the city, Donatello's altarpiece recognized and celebrated Padua's glorious Christian past.⁴⁰ Yet, the connection between Justina, as Padua's prime protector, and the Basilica of St. Anthony goes well beyond the Renaissance sculptor's high altar, ultimately influencing and affecting the iconography of Veronese's high altar for Santa Giustina.

II Santo and Justina

The presence of the Santo in the background of Veronese's martyrdom altarpiece connected this work to earlier images that featured the same structure.⁴¹ Especially during the Renaissance period, the distinct domes and spires of the basilica's architecture (exterior view, Fig. 21) appeared in numerous paintings, drawings, and engravings. The facade of the Santo in such works established a civic meaning and a uniquely Paduan iconography. In the sixteenth-century paintings for the adjacent Scuola del Santo, the depiction of the medieval structure in the

³⁹ McHam, "Donatello and the High Altar in the Santo," 78-84.

⁴⁰ Johnson, "Approaching the Altar," 1999.

⁴¹ As with the basilica of Santa Giustina, the Santo was not Padua's basilica, but it was, in the medieval period as well as today, a major pilgrimage site and a renowned symbol of the city.

fresco images established Padua as the setting for the various miracles of St. Anthony.⁴² Likewise, in the Santo's own Chapel of Blessed Luca Belludi, one of Giusto de' Menabuoi's frescoes features a fourteenth-century cityscape of Padua with the Santo highlighted in the foreground (Fig. 22). Even the interior of Padua's Scuola di San Rocco includes a fresco scene of the French saint entertaining a vision of the city of Padua with the churches of the Santo and Santa Giustina in the background, despite the important detail that the pilgrim saint had no connection to the city and had never visited it.⁴³

The depiction of the architecture of the Santo went beyond its function as an indicator of a sense of place. To be sure, the most successful expressions of Paduan civic religion were those works that combined topographical views of the city with images of the commune's *santi patroni*. Two works for the political and administrative heart of the city, both by Domenico Campagnola, illustrate the desire for visual imagery that ideologically linked the history of Padua to the larger history of Christianity. Campagnola created these works for the Loggia del Consiglio and Palazzo del Podestà, important administrative and civic structures patronized by the Paduan (and Venetian) elites.⁴⁴ *The Madonna and Child with Saints* (c. 1537, Fig. 23), originally for the Loggia del Consiglio, acts as the more illustrative of the two works for the

⁴² The confraternity's inclusion of the Santo in the frescoes' painted cityscapes is hardly surprising given the connection between the basilica and the scuola. Still, the representations in Girolamo Tessari's *Death of St. Anthony* (1513) and Filippo da Verona's *St. Anthony Appears to Luke Belludi foretelling the Liberation of Padua from Ezzelino* (1510) show the unique prominence of this structure vis-à-vis the rest of the city.

⁴³ Other examples of this current of architectural quotation include the Altichiero frescoes of the Santo complex. John Richards (*Altichiero: An Artist and His Patrons in the Italian Trecento* (Cambridge University Press, 2000): 137) states that "in various forms it (the Santo) haunts the architecture of the frescoes Altichiero painted within its own precincts, often greatly transformed, but quoted quite recognizably in the votive fresco in S. Giacomo (domes), the *Fall of the Idols* (domes again), in *St. Catherine Refusing to Worship Pagan Idols* and the *Funeral of St. Lucy* (façade), all in S. Giorgio."

⁴⁴ The two large Campagnola canvases are discussed in the principal catalog for Padua's Museo Civico (Allesandro Ballarin and Davide Banzato, *Da Bellini a Tintoretto*): 147, 158. The full title for the first work is given as follows: *Madonna con il Bambino in trono tra I SS. Marco e Luca e I martiri innocent, S. Giustina battezzata da S. Prosdocimo, i SS. Antonio da Padova e Daniele, un Monaco e due sante*.

purposes of comparison with Veronese's grand altarpiece. This canvas, composed in the horizontally-formatted votive style, features at the far left the Madonna and Child flanked by the Evangelists Mark and Luke. The right side of the canvas depicts the city's patron saints amidst other figures. The significant gap in the center foreground of the canvas reveals the city in the far background with the spires of the Santo highlighted as the town's most conspicuous and noteworthy feature. Interestingly, the painting juxtaposes this traditional civic symbol with the prominent three-part figural group of Justina, Anthony, and Prosdocimus, the latter depicted in the act of baptizing the young princess.

This juxtaposition of the Paduan cityscape, on the one hand, and the baptism of Justina, on the other, created strong conceptual links between the history of the *commune* of Padua and the wider ecclesiastical concept of the holy *commune*. The saint's baptism in the Campagnola represented the foundational moment of *Christian Padua*. The painting's physical location over time within major civic monuments legitimized the work as an official statement of Paduan civic culture, recognizing Justina's baptism as the origin of the city's future prosperity under the protection of Christ, Mary, and various local saints. The visual link between the saint's baptism and the medieval architecture of the Santo became a key motif that was to be readapted later in the century in *The Martyrdom of St. Justina*. As an example of pre-Tridentine civic art, Campagnola's canvas provides a comprehensive message of early sixteenth-century ideas concerning the *commune* and its place within the universal Church.

The depiction of the Santo in Veronese's altarpiece undoubtedly invoked similar notions of civic pride and of Padua's Christian history. The basilica's presence here was unique: none of Veronese's previous martyrdom images incorporated recognizable architectural monuments, choosing instead to favor generic types that translated classical prototypes into the contemporary

Palladian style popularized in late sixteenth-century Venetian painting. Indeed, some scholars have assumed the church in the background must be an image of Santa Giustina since it would be only logical that an altarpiece illustrate the institution that commissioned and housed the image.⁴⁵ Yet, as noted earlier with the Campagnola canvas, the insertion of the Santo was itself consistent with a longstanding tradition that connected the cult of Justina to the city of Padua. In this context, the representation of the Franciscan basilica in a Benedictine sponsored altarpiece would not be particularly extraordinary. The Benedictine patrons were entirely aware of the Santo's importance as a synecdoche and conscious of its implementation in earlier imagery, especially in the canvases found in the Loggia del Consiglio, the Palazzo del Podestà and other important civic buildings.

Veronese's altarpiece likewise portrayed the saint's martyrdom as the origin of Paduan Christianity. Despite the fact that Campagnola's canvas highlighted Justina's baptism and Veronese's emphasized her martyrdom, both paintings evoked pivotal moments in the city's early history that focused on the *commune's* evangelization. This iconographic difference (baptism as opposed to martyrdom) indicated a distinction between the nature and goals of pre-Tridentine and post-Tridentine imagery. Notwithstanding this difference, the two works managed to visualize the sanctification of the civic community through a sacred event centered on the *commune's* patron saint. Justina's noble status remained relevant in both works as the

⁴⁵ Cocke ("Exemplary Lives," 391) in his comparison between the Getty *modello* and the finished canvas states the following: "Presumably at the request of the abbot he replaced the Roman buildings in the background with a view of Sta. Giustina." Cocke's presumption that the structure in the background is indeed Sta. Giustina must be considered mistaken. While the exterior of the Benedictine church, like that of the Franciscan basilica, does feature the unique half-domes that were used most famously in the Basilica San Marco, Sta. Giustina does not have a conical, spired dome like the one seen on the Santo and in Veronese's painting. Indeed, the painted structure undoubtedly resembles the Santo more than either of the models of Sta. Giustina.

depiction of the saint's crown on the ground, both during baptism and martyrdom, suggested her abdication of terrestrial power and her future incorporation in the larger holy community.

Besides representing the commune as a geo-political unit, the appearance of the Santo in these images also underlined the basilica's importance as the primary magnet drawing pilgrims and other visitors to the city. At this point in time, the attitude of the Benedictines of Santa Giustina would not likely have been one of competition with the Franciscans, but rather an effort to capitalize on the influx of pilgrims that the more famous basilica would likely attract.⁴⁶ The rivalry between the two orders in the fourteenth century had already indicated in what ways the Benedictines of Santa Giustina could or could not compete with the Franciscans at the Santo, forcing a redirection of the Benedictine order's energies toward different aims and toward a more elite audience.⁴⁷ In the sixteenth century, the growing congregation, now reconstructing its mother church, could only gain from the foot traffic that continued to benefit the Franciscan pilgrimage site.

Veronese's altarpiece must also be read topographically. In other words, the appearance of the Santo in the altarpiece additionally served to map the locale of Justina's martyrdom and the church of Santa Giustina vis-à-vis the city of Padua. The position of the Franciscan church and the orientation of its façade in the painting approximate the spatial relationship between the two basilicas. In essence, the martyrdom site depicted is likely that of the future Santa Giustina, which was near the historical site (the Campus Martius) assigned by the various chronicles and hagiographies. Justina's martyrdom ultimately led to the erection of the church honoring her, signified in the altarpiece by the classical column that links the terrestrial community to Paradise. Therefore, even as the inclusion of the Santo functioned as the civic symbol for Padua, it also

⁴⁶ Kann, "Who Was the Audience for St. Luke's Cult in Padua?," 163.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 172.

served to locate the events in Veronese's altarpiece. In a strictly chronological sense, the characteristically medieval appearance of the basilica might seem inappropriate to a presentation of Early Christian martyrdom. The tradition, as Veronese's earlier images prove, had always been to represent the severe grandeur and sobriety of classical architecture in scenes of martyrdom. Yet, the ideological and practical functions of the basilica in this case superseded certain aesthetic conventions or the need for historical "accuracy."

All of these assessments become more evident with an examination of Veronese's earlier pen and ink *modello* for the *Martyrdom of St. Justina* (Fig. 24), now located in the Getty Museum.⁴⁸ In this drawing, the artist included a more generalized example of Roman architecture in the background. The insertion of the Santo in the final work in place of this earlier structure was presumably initiated by the abbot of Santa Giustina in order to more strongly reflect the communal claims and interests of the Basilica of St. Anthony.⁴⁹ This change indicated the patrons' goal to place the unfolding theatrical spectacle within the community and with a greater specificity than earlier martyrdom images. The emulation of Christ and the virtues of self-sacrifice, which all martyrdom images seek to communicate, become doubly meaningful in this context. The community would have witnessed the spectacular martyrdom backed by the very monument it would have seen and visited in everyday life. Beyond this acknowledgment of the sense of place, Veronese's work also recognized the larger sweep of history.

⁴⁸ Cocke, "Exemplary Lives," 391-2.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Justina, the Military and Ancient Patavium

The topographical aspect of the altarpiece embraced the larger context of the city's history, especially as it pertained to the cultural life of late Roman antiquity. Padua's Campus Martius (*Campo Martio*), mentioned in the *Chronica Giustiniana* as the setting of Justina's martyrdom, once occupied the open space in front of the basilica that exists today as the Prato della Valle.⁵⁰ This area, as its antique name suggests, would have served as a training ground for the Roman military. Veronese's inclusion of a statue of Mars at the far right of the canvas alludes to the Campus Martius as the execution site as much as it serves a particular narrative function by highlighting the saint's refusal to bow down to this presiding pagan divinity. The fact that this idol represented the god of War and that the site itself invoked the concept of martial values should not be viewed as inconsequential. Indeed, one can read Veronese's altarpiece as a visualization of the two different concepts of war and conflict that existed in late Roman antiquity: pagan and Christian.

The discourse on martyrdom in the Early Christian period often revolved around martial ideas, and the reference to the Campus Martius would have evoked associations with Roman military culture and with Christian martyrdom. Many (male) Early Christian martyr saints were indeed soldiers, an identity often directly stated in their images, and their antagonists were typically the Roman military leaders and the military tribunals that exercised imperial power. Veronese's image of Justina, despite its representation of a female saint, similarly engaged with this historical phenomenon by visually communicating the martial concerns of the hagiographic

⁵⁰ The present elliptical appearance of this open space was largely a product of the eighteenth century.

narratives.⁵¹ As mentioned before, these stories stressed Justina's examination, trial, and conviction by Maximianus, a renowned military leader, as well as her subsequent execution in the Campus Martius, with its obvious militaristic associations. In addition to the idol of Mars, the artist also incorporated numerous soldiers with a wide array of weapons and banners, once again emphasizing the martial nature of the execution. Thus, the motifs and paraphernalia of war and conflict repeat themselves throughout the lower half of the canvas.

Interestingly, the finished altarpiece evinced a greater interest in the pageantry of soldiery than that demonstrated in the earlier *modello*.⁵² In the earlier drawing, a trumpeter stood as the foreground figure closest to the viewer's space. The altarpiece ultimately replaced this figure with the more significant figure of a soldier in full armor. Likewise, the group of soldiers in the left foreground became a more conspicuous feature of the altarpiece's composition than in the scheme of the previous *modello*. While such changes certainly addressed the increased prominence of Justina's cult after the Battle of Lepanto (to be discussed further in Chapter 2), the more pronounced reference to the ancient Campus Martius should not be neglected in this context. Once again, in comparison to the *modello*, the finished altarpiece evinced a greater interest in both civic iconography and martial imagery. Although it is possible to speak of these as separate and unrelated elements, I would like to argue that the increased prominence of these two components in the evolution from idea to finished product are indeed strongly linked.

The emphasis of martial imagery in Veronese's altarpiece reveals the significance of military culture, both past and contemporary, to the development of the martyrdom altarpiece

⁵¹ Justina's femininity is not necessarily an obstacle to an understanding of her death in a military context. Elizabeth A. Castelli (*Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 64) states that the female martyr's death is appropriately "masculine" in nature, but qualifies this masculinity as essentially Stoic, emphasizing endurance and courage as opposed to the more aggressive physical contests espoused in the pagan Roman world.

⁵² Cocke, "Exemplary Lives," 391-2.

during the Counter-Reformation. The goal of the Church to underline the idea of the Church Militant and to stress the agonistic nature of the “heroic” Early Christian period led to an adoption of martial imagery in martyrdom scenes by painters of this time. The Counter-Reformation emphasized the conceptual link between Early Christianity and military ideals, an idea that early Church thinkers had first elaborated in late antiquity. Even as the early Church rejected many of the secular and political motivations behind military conquest and strength, the faith had borrowed and continued the terminology of militarism to define its spiritual goals. Thus, martyrs were repeatedly compared to “soldiers of Christ,” a formulation popularized and confirmed by the growth of Christianity within the rank and file of the Roman army.⁵³

Interestingly, archaeological evidence suggests that Padua’s Campus Martius also served as an arena or circus for public spectacles in antiquity.⁵⁴ This possibility expands the number of ways in which Veronese’s work can be seen as commenting on the late antique culture of Padua. The ancient arena united the concepts of the classical soldier/athlete *and* the Christian martyr more succinctly and powerfully than any other site in the Roman *urbs*.⁵⁵ An integral part of the urban landscape, the arena functioned as a major public venue in which masculine strength and courage could be tested in ways that also entertained the general urban population. The public executions enacted in these locations communicated the power of the social order and the desire for sacrifice at the same time that they satisfied and encouraged the public taste for gruesome entertainments.⁵⁶ While Veronese’s altarpiece does not admittedly reproduce the physical

⁵³ G.W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 42.

⁵⁴ Attilio Simioni, *Storia di Padova. Dalle origini alla fine del secolo XVIII* (Padova: Randi, 1968): 83.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 50-2.

⁵⁶ Castelli (*Martyrdom and Memory*, 109) describes the arena as a site of “ritualized violence” necessary for legitimating the power relations in Roman society.

architecture of the Roman arena and certainly does not visualize a gladiatorial spectacle, the notion of Christian suffering in the context of a heavily populated public sphere remained an abiding quality in Veronese's martyrdom altarpieces. This characteristic becomes strikingly clear when compared to Titian's earlier altarpieces, in which saints suffer and die in environments that are more secluded or covert, therefore attempting to contain or stifle the possibilities of publicity.⁵⁷ In fact, Veronese's martyrdom altarpieces, of which the *St. Justina* is a grand example, highlight the very ideas of publicity, spectacle, and witnessing that were essential components of the martyrdom experience in the world of late antiquity.

Martyrdom was predominantly an urban phenomenon that took place in the great cities of the Roman world, especially, at least initially, in western Asia Minor, a region that was inordinately fond of spectacles and public entertainments.⁵⁸ The attraction to public spectacles and to martyrdom therefore went hand in hand and became naturally strongest in those places that featured a more concentrated population. To some extent, this phenomenon served the interests of the Roman establishment by complying with the well-known dictum of "bread and circuses" and by officially stating the state's disapproval of Christianity to the larger populace. However, at the same time, Christian apologists themselves embraced these executions as a means of glorifying the victims (the martyrs) and as a public way to embarrass the Roman political and administrative structure.⁵⁹ Martyrdom provided the publicity necessary to impress

⁵⁷ See Titian's *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* (c. 1557-9) in addition to the aforementioned *St. Peter Martyr Altarpiece*.

⁵⁸ Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 17-8.

⁵⁹ David Potter ("Martyrdom as Spectacle," in *Theater and Society in the Classical World*, ed. Ruth Scodel (University of Michigan Press, 1993), 53-88) describes the martyrdom as a performance that could either "reinforce or disturb the social order" (53). In some cases, the visibility and exposure of the martyr could sway public sympathy in his or her favor and therefore create embarrassment for the Roman political and administrative structure.

the urban citizenry with the stoic resistance, self-sacrificing heroism, and unwavering faith of the Christian martyr saint, the *Imitator Christi*.⁶⁰ In the eyes of the Christians, these spectacles were not arranged by the consuls or magistrates of the Roman establishment but were in fact “performances orchestrated by God,” a phrase that touches upon the theatricality implicit in such events.⁶¹

The topographical location of an ancient arena near the site depicted in Veronese’s altarpiece may be completely incidental in its overlapping connotation of martyrdom.

If the Benedictine patrons had been aware of the site’s archeological history to such an extent, would they have actively sought to communicate this history? There are sound reasons to entertain skepticism at these ideas. However, the more generalized reference to the public spectacle of martyrdom and its placement within the pre-existing context of the gladiatorial games and other comparable entertainments remain relevant. Indeed, the pageantry of Veronese’s work includes the two human elements that G.W. Bowersock mentions as significant to the concept of martyrdom in late antiquity: the military and the urban citizenry.⁶² The military training ground and the arena, the soldier and the athlete, important aspects of the Roman *urbs*, are transformed, through Early Christian theology, into the concept of martyrdom.

In Veronese’s altarpiece, the placement of Justina’s martyrdom near the historical Campus Martius, the putative site of the saint’s execution, would have also reminded the well-

⁶⁰ Ibid., 54-5.

⁶¹ See Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 52. Castelli (*Martyrdom and Memory*, 132-3) elaborates on the Alexandrian theologian Origen’s postulation of the world as a great theater that observes the contest of good and evil in the arena.

⁶² Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 55.

informed viewer of Padua's own ancient roots.⁶³ This sense, a constant thread in the textual literature, would be reinforced visually by the artist's use of classical motifs in the foreground. The gesture toward the antique would have been no insignificant fact considering the deference the city had historically shown its glorious ancient past. The reputed "discovery" of the remains of the Trojan hero Antenor in 1283 and the subsequent housing of those relics in a late antique sepulcher (Fig. 25) became a significant moment in the retrospective celebration of Padua's roots in antiquity.⁶⁴ The myth of Antenor lent Padua the illustrious ancient foundation myth that nearby Venice lacked while it also established the city's claim to greater antiquity vis-à-vis Rome herself. The timing of this "discovery" coincided with the republican communal period in Padua's medieval history, a time when the city defined itself culturally and politically after the overthrow of Ezzelino and before the takeover by the Carrarese dynasty. This era saw the commune attempting to strengthen its civic identity through the growth of the university, the promotion of the cult of St. Anthony, and the refortification of its classical foundation myth.⁶⁵ The emphatic commemoration of Antenor as Padua's founder conferred the values of republican Rome onto the small commune. The desire to celebrate and maintain its independence came at a time when the threat of more powerful enemies (Ferrara, Venice, and Verona) loomed on the horizon.⁶⁶

⁶³ Unlike the Roman area, whose existence may not have been uppermost in the consciousness of chroniclers and hagiographers, the designation of this space as a *Campo Martio* remains consistent throughout the various writings on St. Justina.

⁶⁴ Simioni, *Storia di Padova*, 2-4. The legend of Antenor appears in Livy and in Virgil. More recently and more extensively, see Carrie E. Beneš, *Urban Legends: Civic Identity and the Classical Past in Northern Italy, 1250-1350* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 39-62.

⁶⁵ Beneš, *Urban Legends*, 43-4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

This medieval discovery and the more general civic pride that marked Padua's relationship to the antique would eventually feed the nascent humanism that became such a significant aspect of the city's cultural identity. As the "birthplace of early civic humanism," as Benjamin Kohl put it, Padua's civic identity honored those contemporary institutions and movements that valued the city's antique legacy even as they conferred glory on the present moment.⁶⁷ Surely, the cultural life of Padua in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries reads like an honor roll: the growing power of the University of Padua as a center of learning, the presence of influential luminaries such as Petrarch and Giotto, the artistically fruitful patronage of the Carraresi, etc.

In mid-sixteenth-century Padua, the Benedictines of Santa Giustina would have been cognizant of the city's roots in antiquity and of the later humanist tradition inspired by this legacy. In fact, the series of events surrounding the "discovery" of Livy's resting place and tomb intimately involved Santa Giustina, as it was on the church's property that these successive discoveries were made.⁶⁸ Livy, Padua's favorite son, became the most illustrious name in ancient Patavium, and the Renaissance with its humanist interests further celebrated the legacy of the famous historian. The popular excitement generated by this serendipitous find, the details of which are well recorded, energized the more elite Benedictine hierarchy as well.⁶⁹ Andrea Kann speculates that the desire of the Benedictines at Santa Giustina to promote St. Luke in the fifteenth century, as indicated by Mantegna's altarpiece, was linked to the idea of the evangelist

⁶⁷ Also, see Benjamin G. Kohl, "Government and Society in Renaissance Padua," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 2 (1972): 205.

⁶⁸ See B.L. Ullmann, "The Post-mortem Adventures of Livy," *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1955): 53-77. Also, Simioni, *Storia di Padova*, 51-4.

⁶⁹ As testimony to the local enthusiasm for the remains of Livy, Ullmann discusses Livy's reputed jawbone, its theft from the sepulcher, and its later use as a relic, clear indications of a crazed antiquarianism in fifteenth-century Padua (Ullmann, 58).

as a successor to Livy as a historian and scholar.⁷⁰ The basilica's ostensible connections to both Livy and to St. Luke created a relationship between the two strands of Padua's humanistic legacy: the classical pagan and the Christian. The emphasis of the Benedictines on scholarly pursuits and intellectual culture could only have benefited from the church's associations with the Roman writer and the celebrated evangelist, two potent Western images of the historian and both interred at Santa Giustina.

Padua embraced any and all allusions to its classical past, and the desire of the patrons to refer to this past in Veronese's altarpiece would serve to heighten civic pride in the community. Perhaps even more significantly, the evocation of the classical past would have inspired the scholarly, humanistic culture of the Benedictines congregation. Desirous to follow and complement the local tradition established by Livy and St. Luke, the Benedictines at Santa Giustina may have been inspired by Veronese's altarpiece to augment Padua's glorious classical past. Yet, one cannot imagine that contemporary Paduans and the local Benedictines visited churches and viewed altarpieces only to ponder the glory of Patavium. More contemporary historical periods were doubtlessly significant in shaping the viewer's connection with potentially abstract notions such as sainthood, martyrdom, and the relationship between temporal (i.e. military) power and the glory of the sacred world.

Justina, the Military and Medieval Padua

While the Counter-Reformation signaled a reconnection to the values of the Early Christian period, especially in regards to the valorization of saintly martyrdom, the sixteenth century still continued to elaborate and build upon particular medieval traditions revolving

⁷⁰ Kann, "Who Was the Audience for St. Luke's Cult?," 168-9.

around the cult of the saints. Veronese's altarpiece is no exception to this trend as the work's civic importance cannot be separated from the saint's cult as previously articulated in the medieval period. The medieval conceptualization of Justina as a protector for the *commune* carried into the sixteenth century, thereby informing many of the ideas addressed in Veronese's work. Beyond this specific characterization, the medieval sense of the martyr became bound with the civic and dynastic interest of the ruling elites, a fact that explains the wide use of martial imagery in these saintly depictions.

This medieval tendency to imagine the patron saint as a type of protector included his or her invocation in situations such as natural disasters and plague. The *inventio* of Justina in 1174/7 most likely benefited in political terms from the 1172 fire that devastated much of Padua.⁷¹ This disaster would have encouraged the clergy and urban laity to rediscover a spiritual past that had been more recently neglected, one whose physical evidence (relics, etc.) needed rediscovery and reclamation.⁷² The finding and reinstitution of Justina's relics, along with those of the other *santi patroni*, would have served to reassure the populace of the patron saint's reestablished presence as the protector of the *commune*. The revival of the saint's cult among the citizenry would help to ward off future disasters even as it fortified the community and gave it a sense of much needed civic pride. In such a way, the saint assumed a role as governor of the *commune* and as an intercessor between the community and God. As Diana Webb describes it, "the saint interceded with God for good governance, upholding and guaranteeing, perhaps supervising, the executive authority of his earthly representatives."⁷³ The patron saint's

⁷¹ See Diana Webb, *Patrons and Defenders: The Saints in the Italian City-States* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 77. For primary documentation, see Anon., "De Corporum SS. Iustinae et Lucae Inventione," *Analecta Bollandiana* 11 (1892): 354-58.

⁷² Webb, *Patrons and Defenders*, 77.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 104.

solicitude and authority therefore became necessary qualities that guaranteed the health of the medieval *commune*.

However, the fortuitous elevation of the patron saint as a protector of the *commune* found its most powerful incarnation in the realm of political conflict. In such a context, the saint once again assumed the identity of a military saint as he or she became instrumental in defeating the *commune's* political enemies. This became true even in cases where the saint had no preexisting claim toward military service in his or her narrative. In fact, many local saints in Padua, both ancient in origin and newly formed, became symbols of political resistance to larger outside threats, especially during the rule of Ezzelino da Romano in the thirteenth century.⁷⁴ St. Anthony of Padua, for example, became a mainstay among the *commune's* heavenly protectors during the tyranny of Ezzelino when the city enlisted the Franciscan saint as a heroic bulwark against the destructive influences of the despot, a fact that emerged in later imagery.⁷⁵ In the next century, medieval Padua specifically recruited Justina to protect the city from Verona's della Scala family on numerous occasions, most famously in 1322, according to a fourteenth-century document.⁷⁶ Thus, the relationship between the patron saint and her protection of the local community forged itself in the medieval period.

Images of martyrdom in Padua during the fourteenth century further elaborated the medieval concept of the saint as a heavenly protector. Prominent examples of this network of

⁷⁴ See Antonio Rigon, "Dévotion et patriotisme communal dans le genèse et la diffusion d'un culte: le bienheureux Antoine de Padoue surnommé le 'Pellegrino'", in *Faire croire: modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XIIe au XVe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1981), 259-78.

⁷⁵ Webb, *Patrons and Defenders*, 138. Webb points out that Anthony did not supplant powerful local saints such as Justina and Prosdocimus but rather simply added his strength to that of the older patrons in order to create a stronger barrier of protection for the *commune*.

⁷⁶ Ireneo Daniele, *San Prosdocimo vescovo di Padova nella leggenda, nel culto, nella storia* (Fonti e Ricerche di Storia Ecclesiastica Padovana, XVII. Padova: Istituto per la Storia Ecclesiastica Padovana, 1987), 38-9.

imagery included the fresco projects designed by Altichiero for the Chapel of Saint James (later renamed for St. Felix) in the Santo and for the Oratory of Saint George, adjacent to the Santo. These paintings detailed the relationships between Early Christian military martyr saints and powerful medieval families, demonstrating how the latter enlisted the former in order to glorify and justify their own temporal achievements. While none of these works depict the martyrdom of Justina, they are nonetheless significant images that ultimately informed Veronese's own Paduan martyrdom of several centuries later. Veronese's *St. Justina* operated within a concept of martyrdom based in preexisting concepts of military culture that had already appeared in Paduan imagery. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine that Veronese would *not* have visited the major works of Altichiero that were housed a few blocks from the church of Santa Giustina.

The work of Altichiero da Verona would most likely have attracted Veronese as both artists hailed from the same town and consequently shared a particular artistic tradition. For example, Veronese art (i.e. art from the city of Verona) often privileged the group votive portrait with both Altichiero and Veronese, despite the separation of two centuries, creating masterful examples of this format.⁷⁷ The martyrdom images of George (Fig. 26) and Catherine (Fig. 27) in the Oratory of St. George and of James (Fig. 28) in the Chapel of St. James evince compositional and stylistic similarities with Veronese's altarpieces: the self-conscious delineation between a crowded foreground and an architecturally-defined background, the presentation of martyrdom as a crowded public spectacle existing just outside the city walls, the focus on the preceding static presentation in place of the violent, dramatic action, etc. In fact, despite their predominant

⁷⁷ An instructive comparison in this context would be between Altichiero's *Virgin Being Worshipped by Members of the Cavalli Family* (c. 1370) for Sant'Anastasia, Verona and Veronese's *Adoration of the Virgin by the Coccina Family* (c. 1571).

frontality and their tendency to depreciate any votive qualities, Veronese's martyrdom images can be interpreted as sixteenth-century variations of Altichiero's earlier renditions of the subject.

Even more significant than these formal and stylistic similarities would be the military context of both artists' works in Padua. While Altichiero's martyrdom frescoes do not display the full-fledged military pageantry evinced in Veronese's altarpiece for Santa Giustina, these works were integral parts of larger programs that had deep martial resonances in their patronage, imagery, and overall message. The Chapel of St. James (c. 1379, Fig. 29), commissioned by the *condottiere* and diplomat for the Carrara, Bonifazio de' Lupi, was originally dedicated to the warrior saint and, as such, partook of the crusading zeal associated with this saint's cult.⁷⁸ The frescoes in the Oratory of St. George (c. 1379-84), patronized by a member of the same family, were, in the words of John Richards, "directed towards the soldier's imagination".⁷⁹ Here, the soldier Raimondino Lupi commissioned an ensemble in which the Early Christian saints approached their self-sacrifice with stoicism and determination, modeling the attitudes that all warriors should emulate.

In works such as these, a secular political message accompanied the sacred. The complicated political subtext of the Chapel of St. James ultimately portrayed the patron as a Christian knight serving God, the Carrara family, and Padua's political allies, all under the auspices of the titular saint.⁸⁰ The frescoed cycle in the Oratory of St. George included a votive fresco, much like the Cavalli group portrait in Verona, of members of the Lupi family as armored

⁷⁸ For an introduction to the complex history and iconography behind the Chapel of St. James (or Capella di San Felice) see the following: Mary D. Edwards, "The Chapel of S. Felice in Padua as *Gesamtkunstwerk*," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47 (June 1988): 160-76; Margaret Plant, "Portraits and Politics in Late Trecento Padua: Altichiero's Frescoes in the S. Felice Chapel, S. Antonio," *Art Bulletin* 63 (Sept. 1981): 406-25.

⁷⁹ Richards, *Altichiero*, 177.

⁸⁰ Plant, "Portraits and Politics in Late Trecento Padua," 406-25.

knights. The *Crucifixion* (Fig. 30) in the oratory also emphasized a strong military presence, once again consistent with the outstanding military careers of the patrons. As noted by John Richards, this fresco contains much detailed, naturalistic observation of military costume and weaponry.⁸¹

Complex artistic programs such as the Altichiero cycles ultimately reflected the patronage of the elite military families of the Carrara period. The members of the Carrara dynasty united their humanistic interests with a military rule that emphasized territorial conquest and defense. The urban landed nobility replaced the communal militia as classical models of military honor became a greater source of emulation and imitation.⁸² As Benjamin Kohl states, “the mounted warrior, proud of his prowess in war and inspired by the antique model of Roman leadership as well as by the *chevalier* of French medieval legend, became the dominant figure in Trecento Padua, serving as a counsellor to and companion of the *signore*.”⁸³ Altichiero’s visualization of hagiography in the St. James Chapel activated the saint as a military protagonist who protected his patrons and the larger Church. The artist’s depictions of martyrdom in the Chapel of St. George also placed these events within the late medieval construct of military conquest and martial display. The martial values of the Carrara court and their relationship to Altichiero’s saintly imagery would find an analogy centuries later with the imagery of the post-Lepanto period.

The Benedictines of Santa Giustina would not fall into the category of the military patron, yet they commissioned a work with a martial resonance similar to that found in

⁸¹ Richards, *Altichiero*, 162.

⁸² Kohl, “Government and Society in Renaissance Padua,” 210.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Altichiero's frescoes. As noted above, the chivalric style of Altichiero's work, certainly marked by the Crusades, would find an equivalent several centuries later in an altarpiece likewise painted in the same city and by an artist from Verona. However, the most significant irony would surely be one of context: the more generalized crusading spirit of the earlier frescoes becomes particularized as the *Martyrdom of St. Justina* ultimately reflects the *zeitgeist* surrounding the Battle of Lepanto (1571). The medieval legend of St. James, depicted on the wall of the Santo's painted chapel, would not lose its strength during the early modern period. When Don Juan of Austria laid the Lepanto banner at the Apostle's shrine, it represented the continuation of the warrior/protector saint in a new age of conflict.⁸⁴ The cult of St. Justina itself would not fade into the shadows, but rather was destined to reach a new prominence.

⁸⁴ Richards, *Altichiero*, 151.

CHAPTER 2

Justina's principal identity as a local Paduan saint changed dramatically with the Battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571, St. Justina's feast day. Rarely has the cult of a single saint benefitted so emphatically from a specific historical event. The naval victory of the Holy League over the Ottoman Empire resulted in a proliferation of writings and of visual imagery that acknowledged, praised, and/or depicted the martyr saint in one form or another. Consistent with the theological and political rhetoric of the day, the battle was couched in terms that credited divine Christian figures for the military triumph. Since the victory occurred on her feast day, Justina became a much more prominent member of the Venetian pantheon of divine intercessors. No longer simply a local saint, Justina now enjoyed a greater position within the Venetian Republic and the Church in Rome.⁸⁵

The increased prominence of Justina's cult post-Lepanto became apparent rather quickly. Soon after the battle, the Venetian mint produced new coins called '*giustine*,' honorary currency that the Doge would hand out to the nuns of the church in Santa Giustina (in Venice).⁸⁶ Theatrical productions invoked Justina in celebration for the victory, and works such as Celio Magno's *Trionfo di Cristo contra Turchi* highlighted the interconnected links between Venice, St. Justina, and military victory.⁸⁷ Perhaps most significantly, the Doge and Venetian Senate

⁸⁵ The cult of Justina was by no means negligible in the period leading up to 1571. She had been a part of the Venetian liturgy for several centuries and her legend had permeated the lagoon. She was the patroness of the church of the *Incurabili* and enjoyed a popular devotion that was quite wide. See Antonio Niero, "Santa Giustina e Venezia: il culto prima e dopo la Battaglia di Lepanto," in *Santa Giustina e il primo Cristianesimo a Padova*, 175-7.

⁸⁶ Iain Fenlon, "Lepanto: The Arts of Celebration in Renaissance Venice," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 73 (1987): 222.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 225. Magno's work embodied the *sacra rappresentazione* form and featured the patron saints of the three members of the Holy League as well as St. Justina and others. This work, first performed St. Stephen's Day, 1572, cast the Holy League, and Venice in particular, as the saviors of Christendom.

inaugurated an annual *andata* procession in 1572. On October 7th of every year, this procession would begin at Piazza San Marco and end at the church of Santa Giustina (Venice). Incorporated into this procession were two significant stops: a visit to Santa Marina, the titular church of another female saint associated with military victory, and a detour to the newly founded Rosary chapel in SS. Giovanni e Paolo.⁸⁸ The significance of the latter visit becomes clear with the recognition that Pius V elevated the cult of the Rosary as a means of celebrating the Lepanto victory. The *andata* would thus perpetuate Justina's memory and forever link the saint to the historical victory gained on her name-day. This annual celebration became yet another instance of the liturgical and civic character of Venetian festivals, a synthesis of Christian tradition and the city's own particular geopolitical interests.

The decision to create a large *pala* for the main altar of St. Justina in Padua, while evolving for several decades, gained momentum and urgency following the Lepanto victory and the subsequent elevation of Justina's cult. As citizens of the Venetian Empire, the Paduan *commune* and the Benedictines of St. Justina would have relished the chance to celebrate their local holy figure with an outstanding work that would attract the faithful in the wake of Lepanto. Of course, to state that the military victory informed Veronese's *Martyrdom of St. Justina* adds nothing new to the existing discourse. Considering the marked increase of representations of the saint at this time, this causation seems relatively straightforward. Yet, as noted before, Veronese's altarpiece specifically invoked Padua's Christian past even as it commented on contemporary history. The work goes beyond a simple schema of historical cause-and-effect. How then does the work link past and present and, in managing to do so, what ideas does it communicate about the future, both immediate and distant?

⁸⁸ Fenlon, "Arts of Celebration," 224.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Veronese's altarpiece evinced an understanding of Padua's local history and tied its own iconography to that of earlier works in which the *commune* was extolled, defended, and incorporated within the wider scope of Christian history. The framework for this history consisted of a series of triumphs and victories either resulting from physical military conflict or outlined in the rhetoric of martial language. Thus, Justina's martyrdom in the Campus Martius, a location directly acknowledged in Veronese's work, originated as a persecution by the Roman military, an event that early Christian writers eventually transformed into a spiritual victory over the same system of imperial power. Similarly, the understanding of Justina as a patroness of the medieval *commune* likewise underlined the martyr saint's connection to military values. Her perceived defense of the *commune* in various instances cemented her significance in Padua and occasioned her leading role in the panoply of late medieval and early Renaissance imagery in Padua. As seen in the frescoes of Altichiero, the conceptualization of saints as the patrons and intercessors of noble military heroes and leaders was very strong in medieval Padua, as it was in other Italian cities.

In a post-Lepanto social and political reality, the *Martyrdom of St. Justina* expanded the saint's preexisting local function by connecting her identity to the larger claims of the Venetian Empire. In this new era, Justina no longer exclusively represented the interests of the *commune* of Padua, but rather, at least in the consciousness of sixteenth-century Venetians, pointed to the larger concerns of the *Serenissima*, the Holy League, and the Catholic Church. As a major player within the Venetian art world of the 1570s, Veronese had the opportunity to represent Justina on numerous occasions as a result of her post-Lepanto popularity. To further articulate Justina's status at this time and to further assess the impact of the military event on artistic

tradition, a survey of two major Veronese works of the period would be helpful: the small-scale *Battle of Lepanto* of 1571 and a large-scale work for the Doge's Palace.

Justina and Venetian history painting of the post-Lepanto period

After Lepanto, the reputation that Justina enjoyed in Padua spread to Venice itself. As a result of patronage from Venetian elites eager to connect their military good fortune to divine aid, Justina became a mainstay in the tradition of Venetian history painting of the 1570s. Many of these works sought to celebrate the state within the context of the Lepanto victory. This glorification consisted of two interrelated parts: first, the triumph of the one true Church over its enemies through the intervention of Christ and Mary; second, the political role of Venetian leadership in solidifying the Holy League and guaranteeing military success. Two works by Veronese simultaneously addressed both ideas.

The small-scale *Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto* (c. 1572, Fig. 31) most likely began as an ex-voto offering by Pietro Giustiniani to the church of San Pietro Martire in Murano. Its bipartite structure neatly divides the celestial from the terrestrial with the two parts following divergent artistic traditions. While the upper heavenly space follows standard sacred allegory, the lower space of the battle means to portray an accurate, cartographic *istoria*. Indeed, the depiction of the Battle of Lepanto features sharply observed details of galley warfare developed from engraved, bird's-eye perspectives of the battle.⁸⁹ The success of the piece came from Veronese's ability to unite effectively both parts of the composition and to communicate a specific message that appealed to the Venetian elite.

⁸⁹ Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 150-153. Wilson discusses the wide dissemination of cartographic prints after the battle. These almost journalistic maps would later be incorporated in large-scale painted imagery.

The placement of the saints around Mary in the upper section underlines the Mother of God as the chief agent of victory. Unmistakably pro-Venetian in the arrangement of the saints, the work emphasizes the central group facing Mary. This group features Justina and Mark flanking a veiled allegorical figure, probably Faith but perhaps even Venezia. The two saints and representatives of the other Holy League powers, Peter and James, play a secondary role in this ceremony of intercession.⁹⁰ Peter's appearance closest to Mary in the honorary (right-hand side) position may be interpreted as a decorous nod to the claims of the Church, but the main focus rests on the figures communicating directly with Mary.

The painting intends to state a straightforward message: the intercession and intervention of the figures above determine the outcome below. The work also reveals the nature of Venetian self-identity, especially the unique protection afforded to Venice under divine auspices. This theme, a recurrent one in Venetian art and society, was a major building block in the construction of the Myth of Venice. The role of St. Justina here becomes a significant part of that ideological program. As a local saint whose day coincides with the battle, her arguably incidental concern becomes instead a dazzling confirmation of Venetian naval *and* spiritual superiority. The historic day falls under her tutelage as much as that of the Holy League saints, and indeed her presence, at least in the Venetian perspective, eclipses those representing foreign political entities.

On a much larger scale, *The Votive Portrait of Sebastiano Venier* (Fig. 32, alternately titled the *Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto*) in the Sala del Collegio of the Doge's Palace

⁹⁰ There does not seem to be agreement as to whether this figure is indeed St. James the Greater or St. Roch (Rocco). The chief complication here involves the fact that both saints have very similar iconographies: dressed as pilgrims with cloak and staff as well as a pilgrim hat adorned with scallop shells. Both saints also have a definable purpose for appearing in this company. The cult of St. Roch was particularly strong in Venice at this time, witnessed by such projects as Tintoretto's ongoing work for the Scuola Grande di San Rocco. However, James's claim, as one of the representatives of the Holy League, would have to be the stronger of the two in this particular instance. As an ex-voto image triumphing victory over the Turks, James's inclusion is more logical, especially since the image has no additional ex-voto significance in reference to the plague, etc.

maintains a similar message. The major difference from the smaller allegorical picture would be the introduction of an *historical* figure, the military commander and later doge, Sebastiano Venier. While this work would have been painted after the 1577 fire that affected the ducal palace, and therefore cannot be analyzed as a source for the earlier martyrdom altarpiece, it still deserves consideration here as proof of Justina's unique status in the Venetian imagery of this period. In this depiction, the battle retreats to the far background with the foreground consisting of an encounter between the celestial community of saints and the doge. The centralized and regally dressed Justina serves the primary role of presenting Venier to Christ. Other saints (Mark, Theodore) and allegorical figures (Faith, *Venezia*) surround this main group. The Holy League saints (Peter, James) have been omitted this time, emphasizing the exclusively Venetian concerns of the program. Indeed, the principal function of the image would be to celebrate Venier's role in the Battle of Lepanto and his successive, albeit brief, role of doge. Glorious military leadership paves the way to ideal state governance, all under the aegis of an approving Christ.

However, since the Venetian government had to operate within its age-old tradition of *medocritas*, it could not extol the individual figure of Venier too ostentatiously.⁹¹ Staale Sinding-Larsen analyzed the changes in iconography from Veronese's original chiaroscuro sketch (Fig. 33) and the final painted product and came to some telling conclusions.⁹² The original choice to have *Venezia* (she is holding the ducal *cornio*) present Venier to St. Mark, as indicated in the preliminary sketch, underwent a transformation somewhere in its development.

⁹¹ The discussion of this concept is treated widely in surveys of Renaissance Venetian society, most recently in Blake de Maria's *Becoming Venetian: Immigrants and the Arts in Early Modern Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 5, 97-99. The social contract that no individual personality should overshadow the goals and values of the state became a lynchpin of Venetian social practice.

⁹² See Staale Sinding-Larsen, "The Changes in the Iconography and Composition of Veronese's 'Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto' in the Doge's Palace," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19 (Jul.-Dec., 1956): 298-302.

Sinding-Larsen believed that the painting was actually repainted some time after its first completion.⁹³ In the final work, Justina replaced *Venezia* and Christ took the place of Mark, thus changing the message from one of ducal promotion and self-aggrandizement to one of *ex-voto* thanksgiving and humility. In this key iconographic revision, Justina's promotion serves the purpose of glorifying the state *within the context of a Christian military victory* against the heathen.⁹⁴ No longer exclusively local in importance, she has appeared prominently in one of the major Italian artistic forums where state propaganda met Christian doctrine: the Doge's Palace.

Justina's widespread emergence in state-sponsored history painting arguably shifted the saint's image away from hagiography and toward allegory.⁹⁵ The juxtaposition of the saint next to female representations of Faith or *Venezia* further reinforced this tendency. However, this may not have exactly represented a new phenomenon. The earlier medieval chronicles of Justina's life had often noted the similarity between the saint's name, Giustina, and the concept of *giustizia*. Since the attributes of the personified *Giustizia* were invariably a sword and often a crown, there was more to the comparison between the allegorical figure and the martyr saint than simply nomenclature. The idea of *giustizia* had been significant in the formation of the Myth of Venice and found expression in various forms around the lagoon.⁹⁶ The resemblance between *Giustizia*

⁹³ Ibid., 299.

⁹⁴ Sinding-Larsen (Veronese's "Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto," 301) states the following: "This, and the insertion in the composition of another national hero, Agostino Barbarigo, means that a votive composition has been changed into what is essentially an official allegory representing the fortunate intervention of Saint Justine and the consent of Christ to the Republic's success in battle against the heathen Turks."

⁹⁵ This discussion of Justina in sacred and state imagery during this period is not meant to be exhaustive. The saint also appears in numerous paintings by Jacopo Tintoretto, Palma il Giovane, and in the work of lesser-known painters, typically in a context that links militarism and the triumphal victory at Lepanto with the saint's intercessory powers.

⁹⁶ David Rosand (*Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 26-36) discusses Venice's self-identification with the figure of Iustitia/Giustizia/Justice. He points to

and Justina could only help the latter as she assumed many of the values of the former, including virtuous and just governance as well as legitimate defeat of the state's enemies. Lastly, the argument for Justina's implementation as a quasi-allegorical figure concerns the nature of female allegories in general. Bronwen Wilson argues persuasively that the female form embodies abstract concepts more effectively than the male form because the male viewer, the predominant one at this time, registers the female body as essentially foreign and less identifiable.⁹⁷ Thus, a female saint could represent ideas such as victory or justice more successfully than her male counterparts. This may partly explain the successful institution of a female saint's cult to carry a significance usually assigned to men, namely military victory.

Even as Venice became the epicenter of the development of Justina's cult in this period, the cult flourished in the *terraferma* as well, most prominently in Padua's Santa Giustina. The Benedictines chose not to specifically refer to the battle of Lepanto in the design for their new altarpiece, a decision undoubtedly rooted in a sense of propriety. Nevertheless, the patrons and the intended audience would have recognized the saint's recent post-Lepanto promotion. A key question at this point would be the extent to which the military victory shaped the ideas and overall appearance of Veronese's altarpiece, or, conversely, a suggestion of the possibility that the artist simply followed his own traditional treatment of saintly martyrdom with little influence from recent history. Adherents of the latter view may argue the altarpiece's similarity to the earlier *Martyrdom of St. George*. In which case, the inclusion of multiple military motifs and the possibly allegorical treatment of the saint have little iconographic basis in the Lepanto victory.

the various depictions of Giustizia in around the Doge's Palace and even argues that the allegories *Giustizia* and *Venezia* become conflated.

⁹⁷ Bronwen Wilson, *World in Venice*, 150.

However, I would argue that certain pictorial elements belie this possible objection. As mentioned before, the finished altarpiece departed from the original *modello* drawing by crowding the foreground with additional military figures and by replacing the extra-military figure of the trumpeter with a brightly hued soldier type. The composition even grants these military figures a greater functional purpose in unifying the entire canvas. Indeed, the one soldier (left-hand foreground) positions his prominent halberd so that it points diagonally up to the figure of Christ. Beyond what this gesture may imply symbolically, it also helps to successfully unite the composition more effectively than the more abbreviated pose in the *modello*. Interestingly, this pose and gesture creates a rough mirror image with the gilded statue of Mars on the right side of the canvas. Yet, while the statue of Mars remains completely in shadow, indicative of the imminent eclipse of paganism by Christianity, the soldiers are comparatively well-lit. Likewise, the statue's *all'antica* dress contrasts with the soldiers' sixteenth-century armor and weaponry. While these modern military men do not likely represent the naval forces that fought at Lepanto in a literal sense, they do seem to embody the contemporary Venetian soldier. The self-conscious placement and prominence of these men go beyond the various examples of soldiery exhibited in the artist's earlier altarpieces in order to indicate a specific historical moment.

A World of Spectacle and Ceremony: Lepanto and Beyond

In order to assess Justina's position within the world of 1570s Venice and to account for Veronese's visualization of her martyrdom, it is necessary to examine the celebrations, spectacles, and political propaganda that circulated at this time. Beyond the boundaries of history painting paid by and intended for Venetian elites, imagery of Lepanto and of other

triumphalist events formed a visual network that celebrated and recorded Justina's tutelage and the larger Christian victory over Islam. Veronese's style has attracted numerous terms in the art historical discourse. "Spectacle," "ceremony," "grandeur," "pageantry," and "theater" are often invoked to describe the painter's most famous, complex multi-figure productions such as the *Marriage of Cana*, the *Feast in the House of Levi*, the paintings in the Doge's Palace, and numerous other examples. Yet, these very terms can also be applied to the Venetian festivities and celebrations in which the painter undoubtedly moved. Even the most cursory glance at public Venetian life in the early-to mid-1570s reveals the extent to which the "theatrical," "ceremonial," and "grandiose" visual culture of the time and place was linked to a very specific sociopolitical and religious ideology. The bulk of these civic festivities proved to be political in nature, with varying degrees of subtlety. Since the period was one of religious strife and ideological conflict, the language of militarism, either to promote actual warfare or to celebrate its more symbolic equivalents, became very useful. Such considerations certainly informed Veronese's altarpiece, in which the visual language of pageantry and theater described the martyrdom of the saint in terms that were germane to the period and loaded with political significance.

Within the long and prosperous history of Venetian celebrations, the series of tableaux and parades that surrounded the formation of the Holy League constituted the virtual starting point of Lepanto imagery.⁹⁸ One procession, for example, depicted three youths dressed as St. Peter (the Papacy), St. James (Hapsburg Spain), and St. Mark (Venice) in the act of slaying a

⁹⁸ See E.H. Gombrich, "Celebrations in Venice of the Holy League and of the Victory of Lepanto," in *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Art presented to Anthony Blunt*, ed. Jeanne Courtauld, (London: Phaidon, 1967), 62-8, as well as Iain Fenlon, "The Arts of Celebration," 201-36 for comprehensive explanations of both the Holy League celebrations and the post-Lepanto victory festivities.

monstrous dragon surmounted by a crescent moon (the Ottoman Empire).⁹⁹ This is a typical illustration of the the current of iconography operating in these celebrations: symbols of the three principal Catholic powers that made up the Holy League as well as their common enemy. In this period, pamphlets and prints used and re-used the same conventional political symbols to highlight the parties involved in the imminent conflict. The print that appears in G.B. Nazari's *Discorso* (Fig. 34) represents just one example of this trend.¹⁰⁰ Here the Venetian Lion and Hapsburg Eagle have landed on the back of the Ottoman dragon and are in the process of subduing it, the lion by biting the dragon's shoulder and the eagle by biting the tail.

Not surprisingly, the merrymaking celebrations that resulted from the victory at Lepanto were even more emphatic. The prolific imagery resulting from this event validated the triumph of Christianity and its defenders (the Holy League) over the threats of heresy and Islamic expansionism. With the announcement of victory and the arrival of the Turkish spoils came artillery fire, the ringing of church bells, all types of impromptu musical outbursts, and more subdued acts of public prayer and ceremonial thanksgiving.¹⁰¹ The triumphal celebrations as a whole included all of the accoutrements of festivity: tapestries, lanterns, fireworks, and military displays. All of these elements became tesserae that combined to create a larger mosaic of meaning.

The contribution of the visual arts consisted on the one hand of a wide circulation of pamphlets and prints that exploited the civic and theological implications of the military triumph. Not surprisingly, a strong anti-Turkish sensibility, often employing standard racial caricature,

⁹⁹Fenlon, "The Arts of Celebration," 205.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 206.

¹⁰¹ Gombrich, "Celebrations in Venice," 64.

pervaded these works (Fig. 35).¹⁰² On the other side of the spectrum, paintings by Venetian masters, both past and present, displayed themselves in the open-air throughout the Rialto and elsewhere. Their subject matter being of secondary importance in this case, these works acted as luxury objects that testified to the city's wealth and talent.¹⁰³ According to the writer Rocco Benedetti's eyewitness account, the marvelous paintings (*quadri maravigliosi*) of Giovanni Bellini, Titian, the Bassani, and other painters decorated the same spaces as the weaponry shops and assorted spoils brought back from the battle.¹⁰⁴ The city's rich artistic tradition and its legendary naval capabilities became mutually constructive parts of the same triumphalist rhetoric. Though squarely in the category of the popular arts and quite distinct from the later formal works commissioned by Venetian elites, these celebrations and their attendant imagery became significant components of the civic experience.¹⁰⁵

Bronwen Wilson refers to these celebrations as "singular events," moments in which history can be transformed into allegorical statements about society, power, and faith through the medium of spectacles and ceremonies.¹⁰⁶ These festivities often masked unpleasant or tense realities, for example suspending concerns about the decline of military prestige and economic prosperity, both relevant to late sixteenth-century Venice, in favor of civic self-promotion. In the case of Lepanto, the stakes became even higher. The type of self-promotion here included the larger Catholic tradition and even Christianity itself. The spiritual anxiety of a universal Church

¹⁰² Fenlon, "The Arts of Celebration," 217.

¹⁰³ Gombrich, "Celebrations in Venice," 65

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Gombrich ("Celebrations in Venice," 68) distinguishes between those elements of the popular arts (pageants, celebrations etc.) that spilled over into later "official" art (fresco cycles, large-scale history painting) and those that could not because of reasons of decorum. For example, satiric caricatures of specific Muslim military leaders may have been appropriate for woodcuts and popular feasts but were not at all suitable for more significant commissions in the elevated tradition of sixteenth-century history painting.

¹⁰⁶ Wilson, *The World in Venice*, 184-5.

threatened by the heretical forces of Protestantism and Islam seemingly evaporated, at least momentarily, in the face of Catholic unity and Christian victory. Indeed, Pius V recognized in the aftermath of Lepanto a means of unifying the European population against Islam even as Christianity was itself undergoing a major schism.¹⁰⁷ As historians have noted, the legacy of Lepanto may have found strength in this perception more than in any long-term political reality.

Another significant example of these privileged moments or “singular events” in Venetian history would have been the visit of Henry III of France in 1574.¹⁰⁸ This elaborately grandiose ceremony represented political propaganda to a degree unseen before in the *Serenissima*. The outstanding visual component of this event, at least for the purposes of understanding Veronese’s artistic milieu, would have been the concerted effort to fuse ceremonial pomp, martial imagery, and *all’antica* classicism. Ephemeral architecture created for the occasion included a triumphal arch on the Lido that was modeled on the Roman Forum’s Arch of Septimius Severus.¹⁰⁹ This structure, the *de facto* entranceway into the city and the gateway that welcomed the young French monarch, featured paintings by Veronese and Tintoretto that flanked its sides. The painted images on the arch itself depicted Henry’s military triumphs, specifically his battles against the “heretical” Huguenots.¹¹⁰ As with Veronese’s sacred works, these secular celebrations of a political ruler gauged his success by his effective

¹⁰⁷ Andrew C. Hess, “The Battle of Lepanto and its Place in Mediterranean History,” *Past & Present* 57 (Nov. 1972): 71.

¹⁰⁸ Good examples of the extensive historiography of this event include the following: Egon Verheyen, “The Triumph Arch on the Lido: On the Reliability of Eyewitness Accounts,” in *The Verbal and the Visual: Essays in Honor of William Sebastian Heckscher*, eds. Karl-Ludwig Selig and Elizabeth Sears (New York: Italica Press, 1990) and Patricia Fortini Brown, “Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp: The Ceremonial Welcomes of the Venetian Republic,” in *Triumphal Celebrations and the Rituals of Statecraft*, eds. Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower (Penn State University Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁹ Verheyen, “Triumphal Arch on the Lido,” 215.

¹¹⁰ Verheyen, “Triumphal Arch on the Lido,” 218. Verheyen states that similar depictions of Henri’s battles against the Huguenots also appeared on similar arches erected in Padua and Treviso for the French monarch’s passage through those towns.

triumph over heresy. Even this “singular event” referred back to the earlier ones of the decade in a manner that buttressed both the past and the present for everyone involved: Henry’s political victory against the Protestants in France paralleled Venice’s success against the Ottoman Turks.¹¹¹

Besides the specific ideological implications of this event, the visit of Henry III shared many characteristics with the Lepanto celebrations, not least of which would have been the use of grand visual imagery to communicate far-reaching political and theological messages. Indeed, Henry’s reception by the Venetian state resulted in more prints and paintings than any other reception in Renaissance Venice.¹¹² While processions and celebrations were intrinsically important to Venetian society in earlier periods, these festivities tended to be more oriented toward local ceremonies, civic customs, and the celebration of the Venetian liturgy.¹¹³ The move toward a more grandiose, ostentatious type of spectacle and public display in the 1570s responded to wider historical events and recorded the claims of the Venetians in these greater political shifts and conflicts. The fact that these displays should become more spectacular and prominent at the very moment when Venice’s political and economic fortunes were in decline should not be seen as too surprising. Often a fanciful perception, whether unconsciously or purposefully, masked a more sober reality.

Despite its commission for a Benedictine abbey in Padua, Veronese’s altarpiece remains a product of the Venetian imagination of the 1570s. The monumental pageantry and ceremony on display in the *Martyrdom of St. Justina* participated in the same network of extravagant

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Jennifer M. Fletcher, “Fine Art and Festivity in Renaissance Venice: The Artist’s Part,” in *Sight and Insight: Essays on Art and Culture in Honor of E.H. Gombrich at 85*, ed. John Onians (London: Phaidon, 1994), 137.

¹¹³ Wilson, *The World in Venice*, 138.

festivities that defined this period of Venetian history. The suspension of sumptuary laws for these events, especially for the reception of the French king, finds its parallel in the richly embroidered garments worn by St. Justina.¹¹⁴ While Veronese had often draped his figures in elaborate, colorful, and expensive clothing, the pursuit of this stylistic hallmark in the 1570s would have been a felicitous one for the painter's various patrons. One must conclude that the Benedictines selected Veronese's workshop for this particular project because of their knowledge of its stylistic and formal capabilities. Unlike the school of Bassano, for example, Veronese and his workshop had long practiced a tradition of festive multi-figure compositions in which public display and ceremonial grandeur became important subjects in their own right. Therefore, Veronese's past success served him well upon entering the Venetian world of the 1570s, a time and place that valued and sought the very characteristics his art was able to provide.

The Classical Theater and Military Spectacle

A revitalized interest in the theater, especially the theater *all'antica*, also marked late sixteenth-century Venetian culture.¹¹⁵ This cultural development has been a fruitful topic of study for Veronese scholars. Art historians have always linked the artist's classicized compositions and tableau-like theatricality to the city's newly gained fascination with the

¹¹⁴ Fortini Brown ("Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp," 1990) notes that the bodies of women were on display on this and similar occasions as a means of communicating the overall private wealth of the Republic. Of course, these were only temporary occasions in which *mediocritas* did not operate at full strength.

¹¹⁵ The Venetian humanists' attraction to the classical theatre carried over to the *terraferma*. While their own urban spaces contributed nothing as dramatic as Venice's unparalleled mixture of spaces terrestrial and aquatic, these towns managed to construct individual monuments that acknowledged this resurgent interest in the classical theater. Palladio's Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, the most famous revival (and reinterpretation) of the theater *all'antica* in the Veneto, is a shining example. As a satellite *commune* in the Venetian Empire and with a strong classical legacy of its own, Padua could boast its own proof of this renewed commitment to the classical as a theatrical framework, albeit primarily through the patronage of Venetian elites. A very early example would be Alvise Cornaro's loggia, designed by Giovanni Falconetto in 1524, which served as a classicizing backdrop for amateur theatrical performances.

classical theatre and with classicizing architecture in general. David Rosand, for one, has written considerably about the painter's relationships with Palladio, Sansovino, and Sanmicheli and the constructive influence these architects' ideas would have had on the painter's conception of space, figural movement, and dramatic expression.¹¹⁶ Others have traced an essential schema in which the Sanmicheli-influenced architecture of Veronese's early work in Verona eventually transformed into the Palladian architecture visible in the artist's Venetian projects.¹¹⁷ Undeniably, the painter's use of architecture compositionally and stylistically differed from the conventional Central Italian tradition in which depictions of *istorie* emphasized perspective and rational structure. Many of Veronese's paintings, on the contrary, use architecture in a scenographic manner, imagining the foreground as a proscenium framed by the architecture that separates the stage from a more sketchily rendered (and inaccurate in strict perspectival terms) background.¹¹⁸

Veronese clearly interacted with the architectural ideas of mid-sixteenth-century Venice. The artist frequented a humanist circle that included such outstanding members as Daniele Barbaro, one of the first Venetians to write extensively about Vitruvius.¹¹⁹ Besides contacts with humanists possessed with a penetrating knowledge of classical architecture, the artist had a seemingly intimate relationship with Sanmicheli and most likely forged relationships with architects such as Palladio, another figure who drew widely on classical sources and had his own

¹¹⁶ David Rosand, "Theater and Structure in the Art of Paolo Veronese," in *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 107-133.

¹¹⁷ Anna Maria Brizio, "La pittura di Paolo Veronese in rapporto con l'opera del Sanmicheli e del Palladio," *Bollettino del centro internazionale di studi di architettura* (1960): 19-25.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹⁹ For more on the complex relationship between Barbaro, Palladio, and Veronese see the following articles' treatment of their greatest collaborative project, the Villa Barbaro at Maser: Richard Cocke, "Veronese and Daniele Barbaro: The Decoration of Villa Maser," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972): 226-46 and Inge Jackson Reist, "Divine Love and Veronese's Frescoes at the Villa Barbaro," *Art Bulletin* 67 (Dec. 1985): 614-35.

interest in the theater *all'antica*. The discourse surrounding the theater and the severe, ennobling grandeur of the classical architecture used to frame dramatic events bear fruit in the artist's paintings of elaborate feasts and, more relevantly to our study, Veronese's martyrdom altarpieces.

Drawings of costume studies by Veronese's hand, now preserved in the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris (Fig. 36), indicate the painter's involvement in theatrical productions of the time.¹²⁰ These prints provide interesting revelations about Veronese's approach to painted drapery as well. Most of the scholarly attention surrounding the painter's relationship to the theater has revolved around his classicizing architecture and its function as a theatrical framework for the dramatic action. In the analysis of Veronese's dramatic tableaux and their inherent theatricality, less attention has been paid to the iconographic motifs (e.g. types of "costumed" drapery) that frequent these works. This type of close attention would lead to a greater sense of the types of personages that typically populate these historically informed works. The existing drawings consist of a catalogue of aristocratic types. Indeed, these studies of princesses, guards, counselors, among others, could easily be adapted into the elaborate feasts and the more sacred altar works.

In the overall discussion of Veronese's *oeuvre*, one mostly neglected, but striking, aspect would be the widespread military presence that exists within this theatrical framework. Naturally, the inclusion of military figures in Veronese's paintings often served the particular narrative addressed in the work. These figures are indeed essential characters that assist in defining the work as an *istoria*. Veronese, however, oversteps the obligatory in these instances by having the protocol of military ceremony dominate the picture plane. I mentioned before how the finished version of the altarpiece for Santa Giustina departed from the earlier *modello* by

¹²⁰ Discussed in Rosand, "Theater and Structure in the Art of Paolo Veronese," 124-5.

stating the military presence in the composition more forcefully. More than its apparent historical function, this presence, I believe, ties itself to the triumphal celebrations and “theater of warfare” that became such a salient part of the 1570s.

A characteristic that helps forge the link mentioned above would be the artist’s penchant for including contemporary dress, military garb in particular, in historical narratives. One famous work, *The Family of Darius before Alexander* (c. 1565, Fig. 37), has attracted commentary for its use of elaborate sixteenth-century drapery to represent a scene from classical history.¹²¹ In this piece, while Alexander wears a vaguely classicized and historicized cuirass, Hephaestion and the other soldiers wear contemporary Venetian military armor.¹²² This matches the artist’s depictions of *sacred* history, such as the Santa Giustina altarpiece, where figures in the most elaborate Venetian fashions enact a martyrdom of the Diocletianic period. Rosand argues that Veronese’s deliberate anachronisms in his choice of drapery allude to a “system dependent upon certain extra-pictorial conventions based on particular cultural experiences and references, operating in a manner analogous to the symbolic and iconographic functioning of architectural forms.”¹²³ More than just mere whim or decorative fancy, these artistic choices reflected the values of a cultural milieu in which theatrical ceremony, military pageantry, and classical/sacred history intersected at various points.

The positive appraisal of military values in narrative and theater went beyond the painted drapery in Veronese’s works to include larger projects and ceremonies. In fact, one such project, imagined by the Venetian patrician Alvise Cornaro, planned to incorporate military

¹²¹ Goethe mentions as much in his *Italian Journey*.

¹²² Rosand, “Theater and Structure,” 123-5.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 126.

spectacle within the context of the classicized theater.¹²⁴ Cornaro's desire to construct a theater *all'antica*, complete with a *scaenae frons* and *cavea*, on an island in the Venetian lagoon (Fig. 38) did not come to fruition. Nevertheless, plans for this project evinced the degree to which the theater *all'antica* dominated the fancies of learned Venetian humanists of the day. Partially rooted in the tradition of the Venetian *teatri del mondo* (Fig. 39), Cornaro's quixotic plan was to serve as a symbolic representation of the larger cosmos and function much as the Colloseum did in ancient Rome.¹²⁵ Most meaningfully to our discussion would be Cornaro's claim that this proposed theater would provide a useful site in which to train citizens in the military virtues. Cornaro's statements imply that, like the earlier Roman amphitheater, this structure would have featured performances that dramatized warfare.¹²⁶ These spectacles would not only have entertained the larger public but would also have taught and legitimated ennobling military values.

In contradistinction to Cornaro's rather impractical scheme, the ceremonial visit of Henry III of France allowed for ephemeral examples of military display that managed to be effective despite their temporal nature. At the king's disembarkation, sixty halberdiers, "dressed in orange and *turchino* silks" (a very Veronesian conceit) greeted the monarch armed with antique weapons from the armory of the Doge's Palace.¹²⁷ The sound of trumpets, drums, and artillery

¹²⁴ See Manfredo Tafuri, "'Island with a Hill': A Project by Alvise Cornaro for the Restructuring of the Bacino of San Marco," in *Venice and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 139-60.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹²⁶ As quoted in Tafuri (145), Cornaro's statements are as follows: "...but in addition one will see war being made: how it is done and made use of now in this City; that it is a very beautiful thing to see and very appreciated by foreign gentlemen; and the fighters will be armed with sallets and breastplates, and use sticks instead of swords, as they do now...But furthermore, in this same piazza (the theater), one will be able to make water enter and exit easily, in order to have a fine sea fight there, as the Romans did, and it will be a fine war on water and will make men fit for combat, and for war."

¹²⁷ Fortini Brown, "Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp," 144.

fire were not far behind. Even as the entire event acted as a type of grand theater, the king's visit contained more controlled performances within the overarching ceremony. For instance, Henry's visit to the Arsenal included a spectacularly swift demonstration of the Venetian navy's shipbuilding strengths and capabilities. Henry and other visiting dignitaries of the period would have been treated to mock battles on the lagoon, naval maneuvers, and floating stage performances, *teatri del mondo*, which often featured mini-battles in their narratives.¹²⁸

In the very different realm of sacred art, the agonistic nature of military struggle moves toward more spiritual interpretations of conflict. However, as visible in *The Martyrdom of St. Justina*, the artist continued to incorporate physical, concrete accoutrements of military life into the artistic program. Whether they highlight the military lifestyle of saints such as George and Sebastian or, as in this case, allude to a female saint connected to a specific military victory, the trappings of the field of Mars remain highly visible. Legitimated by the Augustinian notion of the "just war," these saintly images utilized contemporary understandings of warfare in order to lead to a contemplation of the greater doctrinal conflicts of this embattled era. Yet, there existed more direct, more "real" instances from which the contemporary Venetian world would frame these conflicts. This historical reality, once again, bonded itself to the ceremonious and the theatrical.

The Classical Theater, Urban Space, and Contemporary Martyrdom

Perhaps most significantly, the sense of the urban space as a type of theater, one which included spectators as both observers and participants, proved to be entirely appropriate to Venice's self-image as an extraordinary, unique stage in its own right. The most obvious

¹²⁸ Fortini Brown, "Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp," 146.

example of the Venetian urban environment as a theatrical space would be Piazza San Marco.¹²⁹ The Piazzetta (Fig. 40) especially was a *bona-fide* stage for public spectacles and executions, utilizing Jacopo Sansovino's employment of the classical orders of antiquity in order to create a stage that aptly suited the ruling class. Indeed, according to Johnson, the Piazzetta was both an auditorium **and** a stage, highlighting the fact that spectators were voyeurs and participants in a scenographic theater.¹³⁰ These assessments overlap the goals of Veronese's works in several respects. Sansovino's use of Roman monuments as models for his contemporary structures, the very buildings that framed the Piazzetta, reappeared in much of Veronese's work. Despite the seemingly archaic emphasis on the medieval Santo, accounted for in Chapter 1, the *Martyrdom of St. Justina* continued to follow a distinctly sixteenth-century Venetian interpretation of classicism. The stage designs and theories of Sebastiano Serlio, the theoretical writings of Palladio, and the ideas of Sansovino helped shape this tradition and became formal hallmarks of Veronese's style.

The recorded fact that Piazza San Marco and other urban spaces, both within Venice and elsewhere, were also execution sites should not be considered insignificant. On the contrary, this contemporary reality undoubtedly would have charged *The Martyrdom of St. Justina* with a familiarity that may seem provocative to the modern viewer. How are we to find a connection between the actual execution of criminals, enemies of the state, and heretics on a stage within the crowded urban environment *and* those martyrdom images of Christian saints placed in a similar context? Clearly, sacred images would not overtly seek a moral comparison between the virtuous servants of divine will and the sinful enemies of God and Christendom. After all, the

¹²⁹ See Eugene J. Johnson, "Jacopo Sansovino, Giacomo Torelli, and the Theatricality of the Piazzetta in Venice," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 59 (2000): 436-453.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 436. Johnson discusses the influence of the Piazzetta on Serlio's perspectival scene designs.

altarpiece in the Counter-Reformation period demanded a decorous treatment of a subject that was meant to instruct and move a broad public in the ways of virtue. However, the viewer of works such as *The Martyrdom of St. Justina*, would have likely recalled the formal arrangement of the sixteenth-century execution, especially those enacted in architecturally updated urban spaces such as the Piazzetta. While public executions were a common feature of this historical era, the frame of reference, while possibly including this type of lived experience, must also reach out to nobler, more respectable models. One such model would have been freshly minted in the minds of the Venetian public.

The Ottoman military seizure of Venetian-owned Cyprus became the proverbial last straw that spurred the creation of the Holy League. In retrospect, it seems only appropriate that an event in Cyprus furnished the most noteworthy contemporary “martyrdom” of this period, one that would reverberate throughout Venetian society. The gruesome execution of the Venetian military officer, Marc’Antonio Bragadin, Captain-General of Famagusta, created a sensation through both its intrinsic brutality as well as its potent historical context.¹³¹ Indeed, it was not lost on the Christian West that Bragadin’s victimization was at the hands of the heretic Turk, a circumstance that echoed the martyrdoms of the Christian past.

The details of Bragadin’s death in August of 1571 even played out like a Martyr Act or *Passio*, and the written records and oral reports likely embellished the events. The Turks reputedly bound and beheaded the prisoners they captured after their successful siege of Famagusta. After they dispatched his men, they focused their energies on demeaning Bragadin through verbal taunts and humiliating acts. While these actions are rather unremarkable, in so

¹³¹ For a concise description of this event see Niccolò Capponi, *Victory of the West: the Great Christian-Muslim Clash at the Battle of Lepanto* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007), 233-5 and Roger Crowley, “Bragadin’s Defense,” *MHQ* 21 (Spring 2009): 66-75.

much that they generally defined the relationship between conquerors and conquered, what came afterward was framed and understood as a martyr narrative. Bragadin was hoisted on one of the main galley's masts so that all could see. In this position, Ottoman soldiers purportedly mocked the soldier, shouting up to him, with an evident dose of sarcasm, if he could see Christ from that vantage point. He was then taken down and removed to the main square where he was tied to a column. The commander of the Turkish army, Lala Mustafa Pasha, asked Bragadin from the nearby palace balcony if he wished to convert to Islam. Bragadin, as the reports stated, responded by praying out loud, at which time an executioner proceeded to flay him. Bragadin naturally died during this process but before dying he managed to utter, "In your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit."¹³² Not surprisingly, many Christians at the time compared Bragadin's death to that of Christ. Even the Ottoman grand vizier, who publicly censured Pasha's actions, described Bragadin's death as a "cruel martyrdom."¹³³ Comparisons to the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew were perhaps inevitable. Though the execution of Bragadin may not have been incorporated into any specific artwork, the language and concept of martyrdom would have engaged the public imagination through the oral and written discourse surrounding this pivotal event.

Thus, the potential for martyrdom to be enacted or reenacted in the contemporary world of the late sixteenth century, a period of intense religious contestation and persecution, became a significant facet of Veronese's altarpiece. As with the martyrdom of Bragadin, the Paduan altarpiece further brought the context of the Early Christian martyr into the contemporary sphere. The painting itself speaks to this bridging of historic time: figures from late antiquity swathed in elaborate contemporary dress and armor, which attest to the material luxuriance and military

¹³² Capponi, *Victory of the West*, 234-5.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 235.

glory of Venice; the juxtaposition of a pagan statue and classical column, late antique saint and medieval basilica, all infused with the stylistic hallmarks of contemporary Venetian pageantry and influenced by celebratory post-Lepanto imagery. These same elements, from all the aforementioned chronological periods, also intersect the concerns of the civic and the local. They legitimate the pride of a city that preceded Rome in its ancient origins, defended itself valiantly as a medieval *commune*, and gained materially and spiritually in the reflected glory of the *Serenissima* as a satellite member of the Venetian Republic.

CONCLUSION

As a particular format and genre, the altarpiece has proved difficult to theorize in satisfying terms. Questions of political and ideological contemporaneity become difficult to assess within a work whose *raison d'être* largely concerns liturgical practice and formalized ritual. Sinding-Larsen concluded as much when he castigated art historians who tended to neglect the liturgy when dealing with the altarpiece through their unprincipled, a-ritual treatment of the artwork.¹³⁴ Of course, an overburdened contextualization of the work within contemporary history and politics can dangerously misprision the work into a set of values or meanings that it did not seek to actively promote. The sacred, liturgical function of the altarpiece is clearly paramount. However, shifts in iconography and style, as noted above, do often connect to the specific and the particular, to all those considerations that would seem to be beyond the purely functional interest of the altarpiece.

Veronese's *Martyrdom of St. Justina* can be added to a fascinating list of notable sixteenth-century altarpieces that allude to recent political and military history. Titian's *Ca'Pesaro Altarpiece* (c. 1519-26) would probably serve as the most famous example. An even more direct reference to military victory over the Turks, that work's enshrinement of a particular patron, something Veronese's work doesn't seek to accomplish, demonstrated the extent to which the altarpiece could incorporate the personal, political claims of an historical individual. Yet, as a Venetian document of the *terraferma*, Lorenzo Lotto's *Colleoni Martinengo Altarpiece* (c.1516, Fig. 41) has even more points in common with the *Martyrdom of St. Justina*. Lotto

¹³⁴ Staale Sinding-Larsen, *Iconography and Ritual: A Study of Analytical Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.)

painted the work for the church of Santi Stefano e Domenico in Bergamo, a major city near the western border of the Venetian Republic. During the time of its creation, a period of political conflict, the city had passed back and forth between Venice and France and Spain.¹³⁵ However, the patron, Count Alessandro Colleoni Martinengo, was resolutely pro-Venetian in his political sympathies, a fact communicated in various places in Lotto's altarpiece.¹³⁶ The patron saint of Bergamo, St. Alexander, appears at the far left of the work, but the place of honor is reserved for St. Mark. The evangelist also appears in one of the spandrel mosaics at the top of the *pala*, a double appearance that reinforces the acknowledgement of Venetian hegemony. Contemporary politics, and the ideological choices involved, once again surfaced in the altarpiece form.

Peter Humfrey's belief that the Lotto altarpiece referenced the "contentedly subjugated position of Bergamo in relation to Venice" poses problems and casts doubts back on aspects of Veronese's *Martyrdom of St. Justina*.¹³⁷ While this study has demonstrated that Veronese's painting must be viewed as a multivalent visual document that engaged with Padua's past and with the contemporary Venetian Republic, the complex relationship between the satellite *commune* and the capital seems more difficult to unravel. How, for example, would typical Paduan citizens have responded to the appropriation of their patron saint by Venice? Did Paduans feel fully integrated in the mainstream of Venetian life or did a certain current of resistance and resentment still exist as residual tension from the early part of the century? Such questions cannot be fully answered here. Surely the Benedictine patrons, many of whom would have been Venetian elites, did not seek to challenge Venetian hegemony in their altarpiece. In

¹³⁵ Peter Humfrey, *Lorenzo Lotto* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997): 43.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 46.

fact, their goal would have been the opposite: the desire to incorporate Padua and its glorious past in the triumph of Venice and the Catholic Church over the Turkish infidel.

Another sound objection relates to viewership. The altarpiece's positioning in the back of the long choir space would have made many details of the work difficult for the typical celebrant to discern. This remains certainly true today with the barely adequate electric lighting that is only available on request. What would have been the experience of Paduan citizens who only had natural lighting to guide their viewing experience, indeed, lighting that doesn't even fall on the painting itself? Do these practical considerations of space, location, and sight negate proposals that the altarpiece promoted the civic *urbs*? These questions are speculative and perhaps cannot be broached in any definite manner. However, the clergy and the members of the choir would have clearly had direct access to the work, and those citizens who never entered the sanctuary space would have had a general sense of the work's contents. Perhaps we can conceive the narrative, motifs, and ideas of the work filtering down into the community orally as well as visually. This provides a suitable parallel to St. Justina's cult, which as with all saints' cults consisted of oral, written and visual discourses. The very subject itself, the martyrdom of the city's patroness, would have attracted the interest of the basilica's visitors. The fact that Veronese and his workshop infused this subject with lavish detail, expressive piety, and entrancing color would only have captivated the community even more forcefully.

APPENDIX A: FIGURES

Fig. 1. Paolo Veronese, *Martyrdom of St. Justina*, 1575, Santa Giustina, Padua.



Fig. 2. Basilica of St. Giustina, façade, Padua.



Fig. 3. Paolo Veronese, *Martyrdom of St. George*, c. 1565, San Giorgio in Braida, Verona.

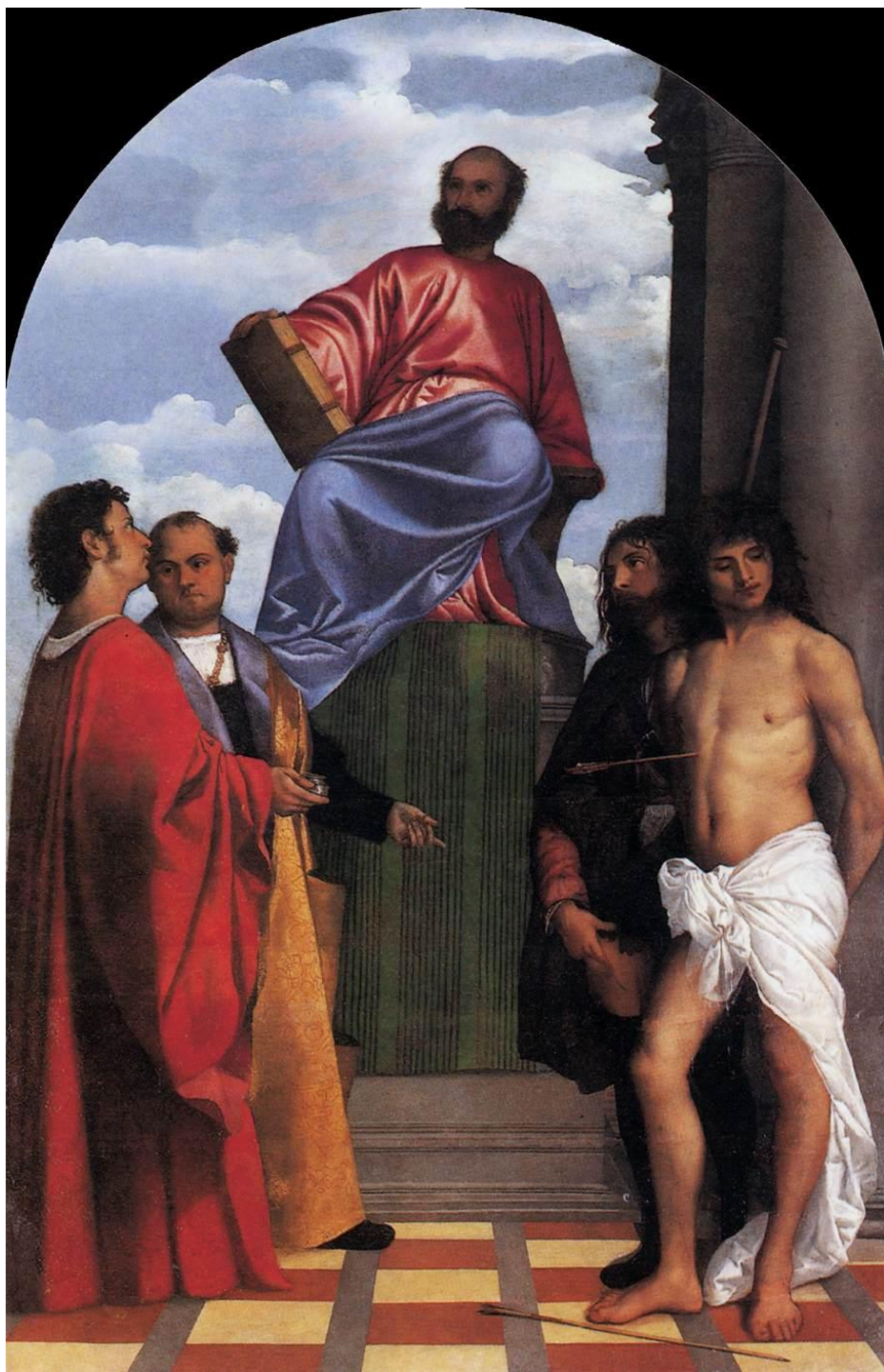


Fig. 4. Titian, *St. Mark Altarpiece*, c. 1510, Santa Maria della Salute, Venice.



Fig. 5. Giotto, *Stefaneschi Altarpiece*, c. 1305, Pinacoteca, Vatican.



Fig. 6. Carlo Loth, *Martyrdom of St. Peter Martyr*, c. 1691, (copy of lost original by Titian, c. 1526), Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.



Fig. 7. Paolo Veronese, *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*, c. 1575, Accademia, Venice.



Fig. 8. Paolo Veronese, *Martyrdom of St. Justina*, c. 1565, Museo Civico, Padova.



Fig. 9. Choir, Santa Giustina, Padua.



Fig. 10. Oratory of San Prosdocimo, Santa Giustina, Padua.



Fig. 11. Romanesque Portal, 13th c., Basilica of Santa Giustina, Padua.



Fig. 12. St. Justina, from Rogati-Negri Sarcophagus, c. 1350, Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua.



Fig. 13. Giovanni Bellini, *St. Justina*, 1460-70, Museo Bagatti-Valsecchi, Milan.



Fig. 14. Pantaleon di Paolo, *St. Justina*, 15th c., Santa Giustina, Padua.



Fig. 15. Francesco Segala, *St. Justina*, 15th c., Santa Giustina, Padua.

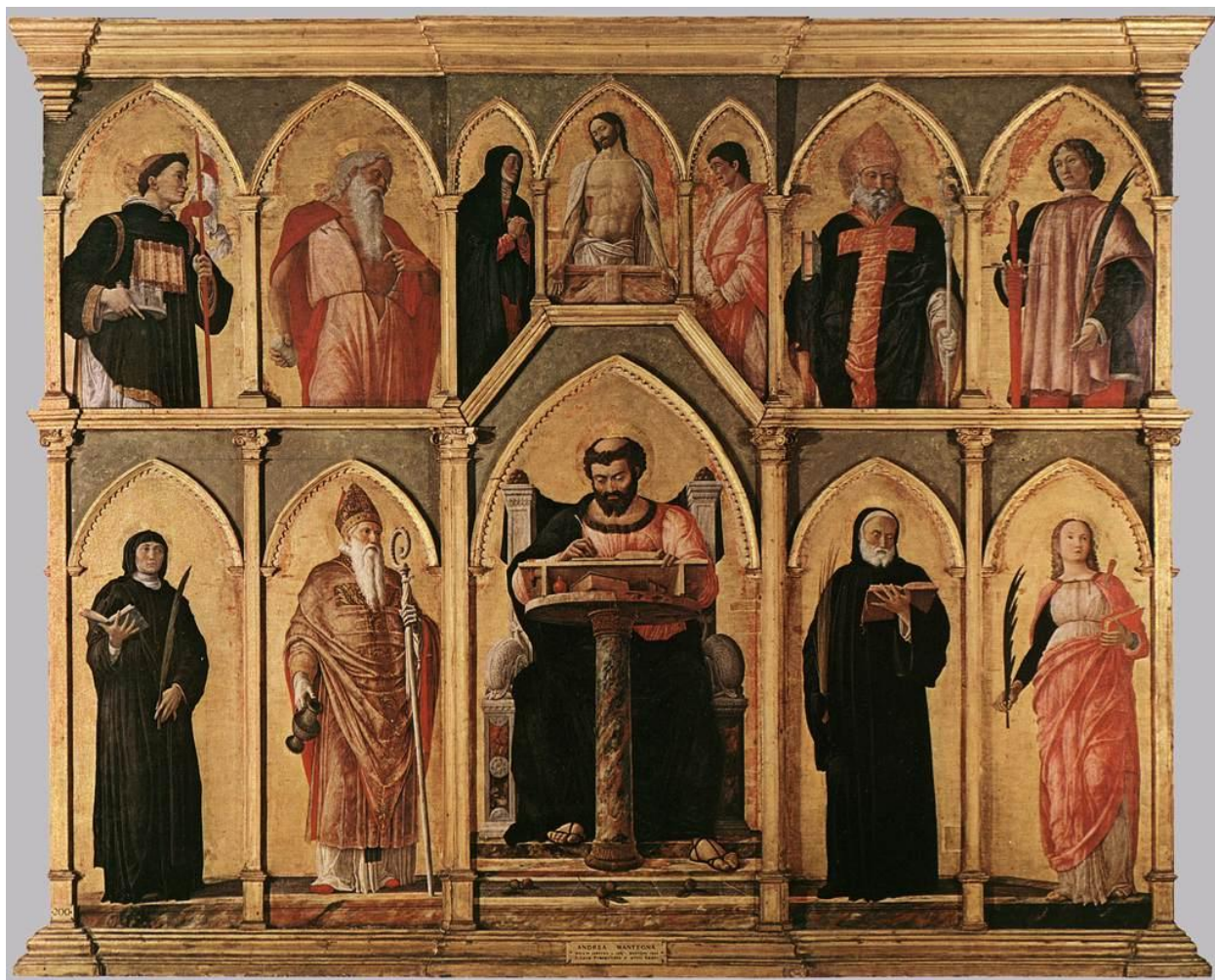


Fig. 16. Andrea Mantegna, *St. Luke Polyptych*, 1453, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.



Fig. 17. Andrea Mantegna, *St. Justina*, from *St. Luke Polyptych*, 1453, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.



Fig. 18. Romanino, *Madonna and Child with Saints Benedict, Justina, Prosdocimus, and Scholastica*, 1513, Museo Civico, Padua.



Fig. 19. Donatello, altarpiece, c. 1447-50, Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua.



Fig. 20. Donatello, St. Justina, from altarpiece, Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua.



Fig. 21. aerial view, Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua.

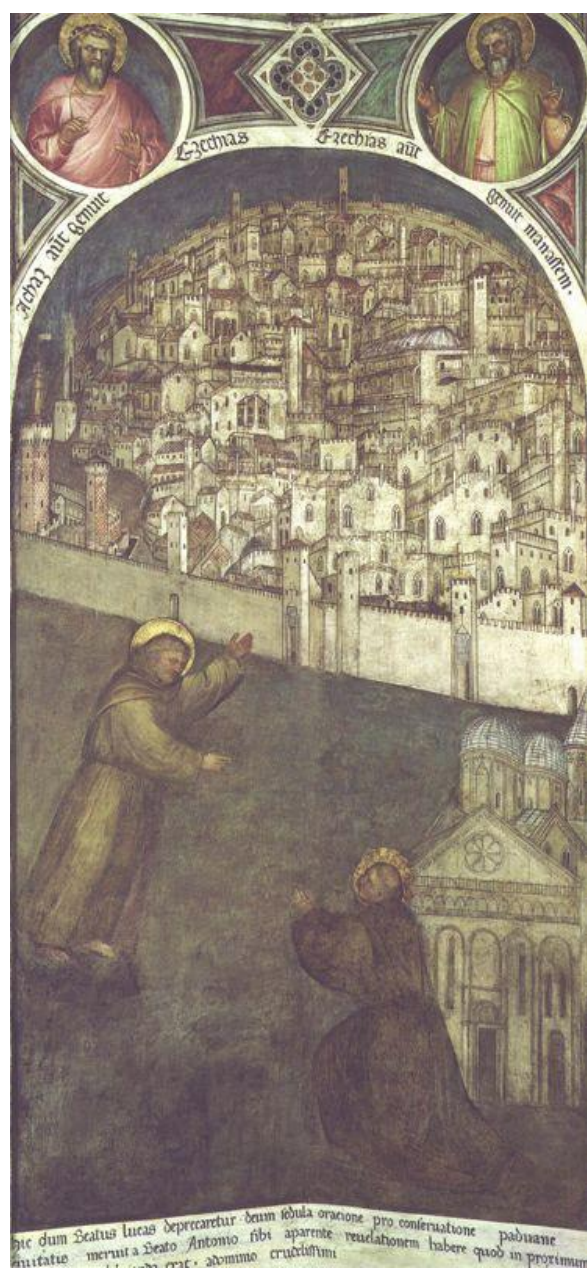


Fig. 22. Giusto de' Menabuoi, from Chapel of Luca Belludi, c. 1382, Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua.



Fig. 23. Domenico Campagnola, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, c. 1537, Museo Civico, Padua.



Fig. 24. Paolo Veronese, *modello* for *Martyrdom of St. Justina*, c. 1575, Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



Fig. 25. Tomb of Antenor, Padua.



Fig. 26. Altichiero, *Martyrdom of St. George*, c. 1379-84, Oratory of St. George, Padua.



Fig. 27. Altichiero, *Martyrdom of St. Catherine*, c. 1379-84, Oratory of St. George, Padua.



Fig. 28. Altichiero, *Martyrdom of St. James*, c. 1379, Chapel of St. James (Felix), Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua.



Fig. 29. Chapel of St. James (Felix), Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua.

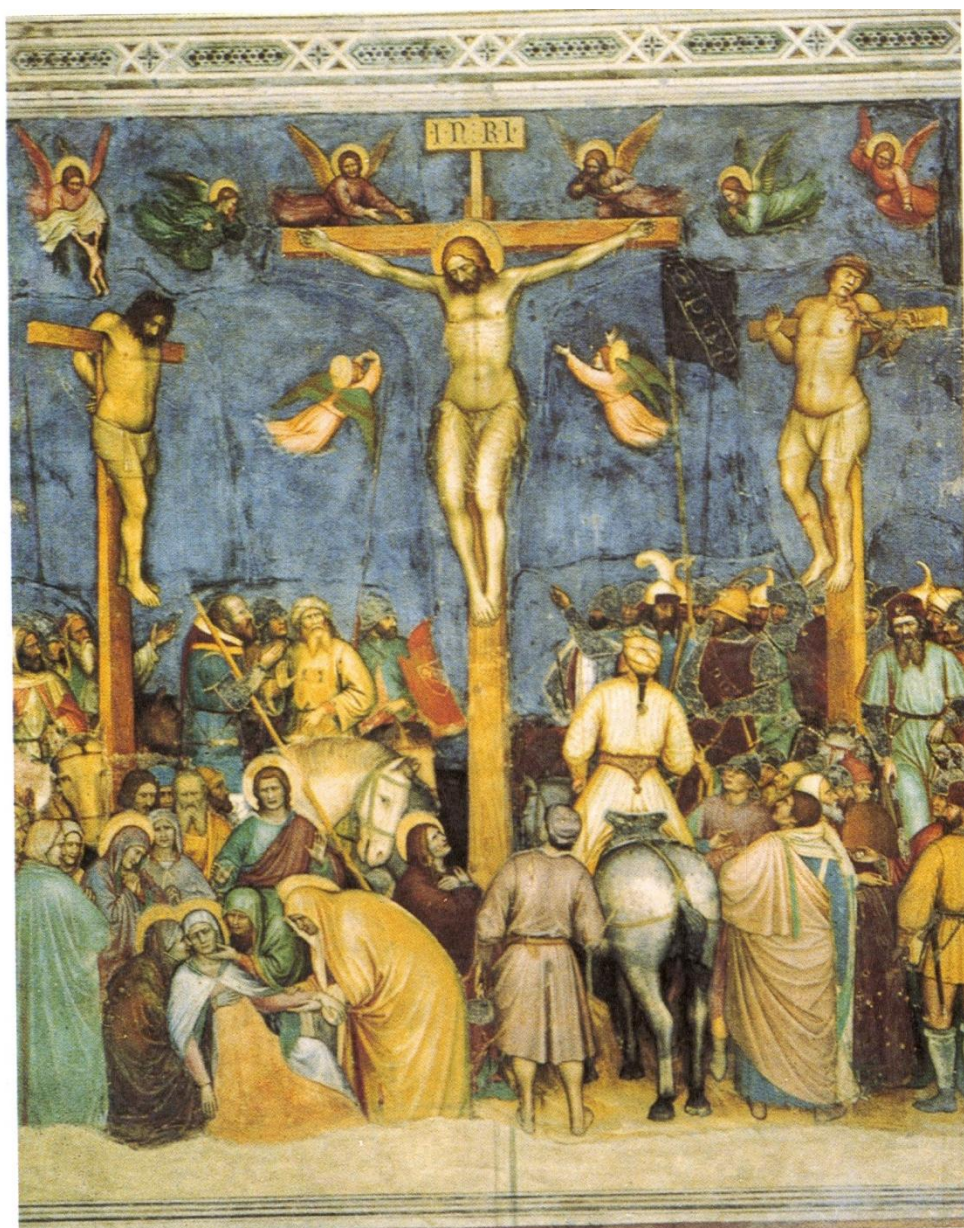


Fig. 30. Altichiero, *Crucifixion*, c. 1379-84, Oratory of St. George, Padua.



Fig. 31. Paolo Veronese, *Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto*, c. 1572, Accademia, Venice.



Fig. 32. Paolo Veronese, *Votive Portrait of Sebastiano Venier*, c. 1581-82, Sala del Colegio, Doge's Palace, Venice.



Fig. 33. Paolo Veronese, *chiaroscuro* sketch for the *Votive Portrait of Sebastiano Venier*, c. 1578-80, British Museum, London.



Fig. 34. G. B. Nazari, *Discorso della futura et sperata vittoria contro il Turco*, 1570.



Fig. 35. Nicolò Nelli, *Turkish Pride*, 1571, Biblioteca Comunale, Mantua.

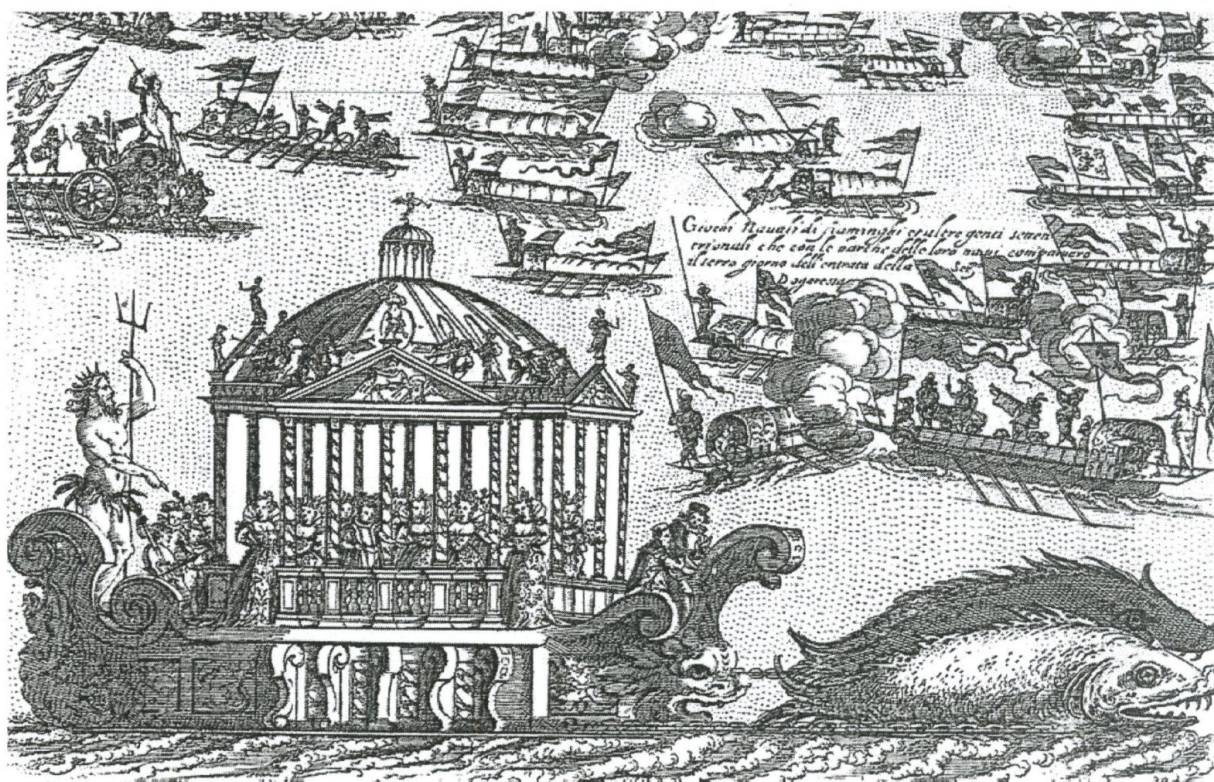


Fig. 36. Giacomo Franco, *Il nobilissimo teatro deto il mondo*, 1597, Museo Correr, Venice.



Fig. 37. Paolo Veronese, *Family of Darius before Alexander*, c. 1565, National Gallery, London.



115. Graphic reconstruction of Alvisio Cornaro's project for the Bacino of San Marco: (A) the fountain; (B) the theater in the water; (C) the "shapeless little hill." Drawing by Luca Ortelli.

Fig. 38. Reconstruction of Alvisio Cornaro's project for the Bacino of San Marco.



Fig. 40. Anonymous, *Il Volo del Turco*, c. 1550.



Fig. 41. Lorenzo Lotto, *Colleoni Martinengo Altarpiece*, c. 1516, Santi Bartolomeo e Stefano, Bergamo.

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ABSTRACT

VERONESE'S *MARTYRDOM OF ST. JUSTINA*: THE PROMOTION OF A LOCAL MARTYR SAINT

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Major: Art History

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The altarpiece for the high altar of the Benedictine basilica of Santa Giustina in Padua, painted by Paolo Veronese around 1575, depicts the martyrdom of Justina, an Early Christian saint. While art historians often discuss late sixteenth-century images of martyrdom within the general historical context of the Counter-Reformation, St. Justina's increased prominence during this period was also connected to a more specific historical event: the Battle of Lepanto of 1571. The naval victory of the Catholic Holy League alliance over the Ottoman Turks on the saint's feast day (October 7th) increased the popularity of the saint's cult within the Venetian Republic. While Veronese's monumental altarpiece undoubtedly reflected this promotion, the work also managed to invoke the ancient and medieval history of the local *commune* of Padua. The painting's use of martial imagery linked the various geopolitical interests involved in the saint's cult (Padua, Venice) at the same time that such imagery helped bridge the historical gap between late antiquity and the contemporary world. I argue that long-established written and visual connections between martyrdom and military conflict guided viewers toward an understanding of the saint as a significant participant in local history and politics.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Jonathan Salvati was born on December 7, 1980 in Rochester, Michigan. He received his Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from Kalamazoo College in 2003. In 2008, he entered the graduate school of the James Pearson Duffy Department of Art and Art History at Wayne State University in Detroit, earning his Master of Arts in 2012. He is currently pursuing his PhD in art history at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.